KSGU Volume 9

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These are the novel illustrations that were included in Volume 9

福井晴敏(ふくい・はるとし)

1968年、東京都墨田区生まれ。1998年に『Twelve Y.O.』で第44回江戸川乱歩賞を受賞し作家デビュー。『亡国のイージス』『終戦のローレライ』『Op.ローズダスト』など著書、映画化作品多数。2009年6月まで、月刊ガンダムエース誌上にて本作『機動戦士ガンダムUC』を連載。

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Kadokawa Comics A

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明らかになった『ラプラスの箱』の最終座標に向けて
バナージたちを乗せた《ネェル・アーガマ》は最後の探索に出発する。
しかし、その行く手には圧倒的多勢のネオ・ジオン艦隊と
対《ユニコーン》用の切り札を携えた親衛隊隊長アンジェロが待ち構えていた。
この強大な包囲網を突破し、あるべき未来をその手につかむため
最終形態となった《ユニコーンガンダム》が決戦の宇宙へと出撃する!
ガンダムサーガ最新作。ついに怒涛の最終章(クライマックス)へと突入!

機動戦士ガンダムUC ユニコーン
MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM UNICORN

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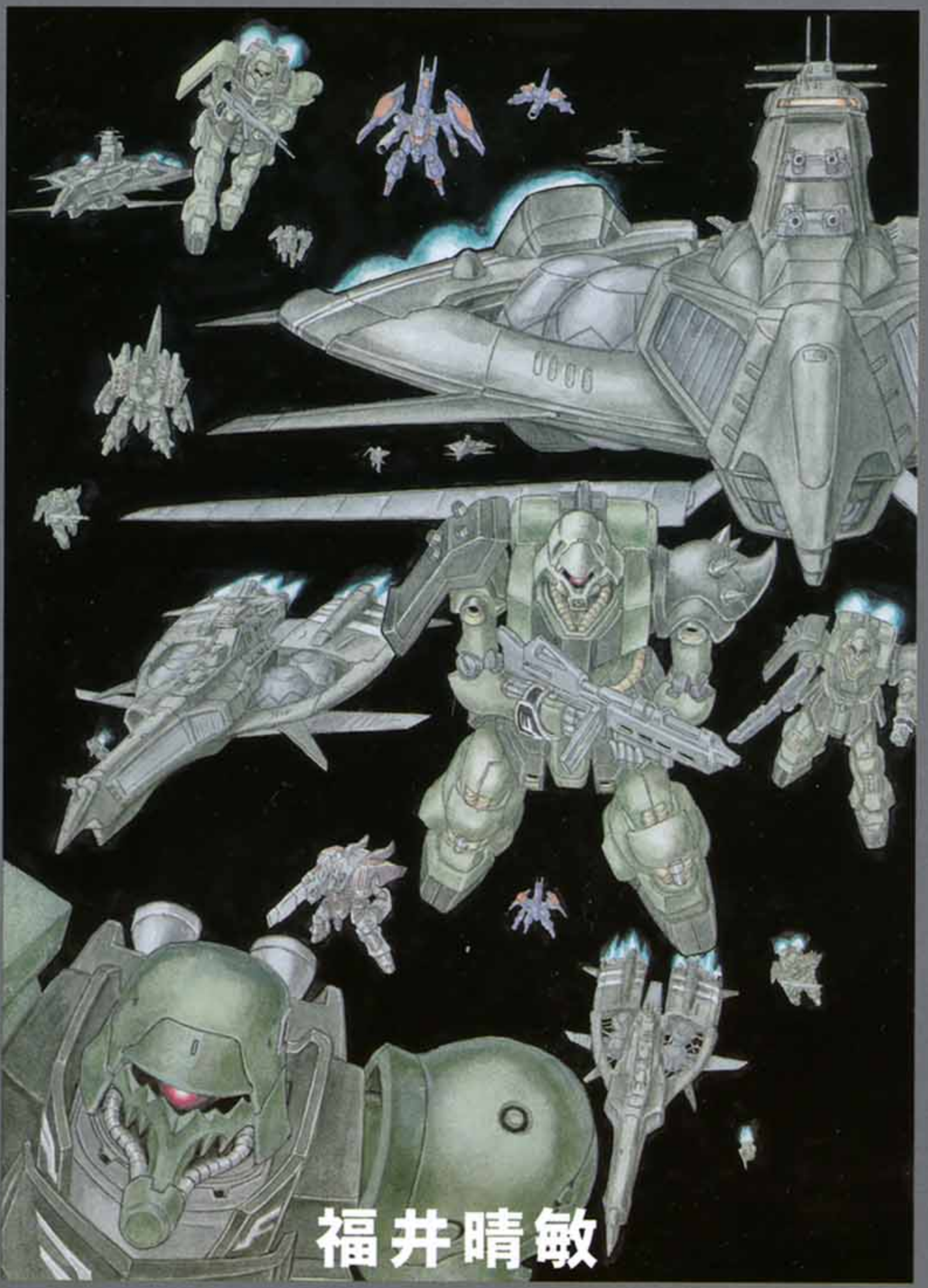
機動戦士ガンダムUC ユニコーン

9 虹の彼方に(上)



福井晴敏

キャラクターデザイン 安彦良和　メカニックデザイン カトキハジメ　原案 矢立肇・富野由悠季　挿絵 虎哉孝征

Previous to GUNDAM UC

前巻までのあらすじ

宇宙世紀0096年。連邦政府転覆の可能性を秘めるとされる宇宙世紀の謎『ラプラスの箱』をめぐり、『箱』を所有するビスト財団とその隠匿を目論む連邦政府、そしてそれを利用せんとするネオ・ジオン軍残党との間で秘かに駆け引きが続けられていた。工業コロニー〈インダストリアル7〉に住む少年バナージ・リンクスは、謎の少女オードリー（ミネバ・ラオ・ザビ）を助けたことから『箱』をめぐる争乱に巻き込まれ、実の父にしてビスト財団当主であったカーディアスから純白のMS《ユニコーンガンダム》を託されることとなる。

『ラプラスの箱』に至る座標を段階的に開示する《ユニコーン》に導かれ、時にはネオ・ジオン側に身を置きながら各地

を転戦するバナージ。囚われたオードリーを取り戻す道程の中でネオ・ジオン残党のジンネマンやマリーダとも絆を深め、救い出したオードリーらと共に連邦軍の強襲揚陸艦《ネェル・アーガマ》へと合流することとなる。

しかし所属を超えて手を取り合ったのもつかの間、《ネェル・アーガマ》に収容されたジンネマンらは反乱を起こし、それに呼応したネオ・ジオンの首魁フル・フロンタルに艦は制圧されてしまう。オードリーとマリーダの行動により、再び結束を取り戻したバナージたちであったが、フロンタルは既に『箱』を手に入れるべく《ユニコーン》が示した最終座標――〈インダストリアル7〉のコロニービルダー〈メガラニカ〉――へと向かっていた。すべての因縁に決着をつけるべく、その跡を追う《ネェル・アーガマ》。ついに『箱』をめぐる争乱に終止符が打たれようとしていた。

イラスト／安彦良和、虎哉孝征

Chapter 1

Part 1

The poison called tobacco, which was once almost extinct in the old ages, still lingered in the days of Universal Century 0096. This was the result of tobacco quality improving as a result of the space age, like the reduction of tar to reduce the negative effects on the human body and the intricate machines, and the development of chemicals that combust at low temperatures in tobacco, but most people felt that the biggest reason for the revival of tobacco was the One Year War.

The generals frowning at each other in the Operations Conference room, the senators and government officials flabbergasted by the damage reports that kept coming were the same as the frontline soldiers. To humanity, which lost almost half its population, and its latter half was at the brink of danger, tobacco became a solace that could reduce the pressure they never had before. The principle to ban smoking in government offices and the parliamentary halls were quickly abandoned, and in periods of war, tobacco stench were around, whether it was the conference rooms or the rest rooms. This bad habit continued even after the war, and in Dakar, there were continuous signs of senators taking at least on stick. Even the Settlement Issues Council, which involved important figures from both ruling and opposition parties, were of no exception—no, it was because there were a lot of experienced veterans from the War and after it, and

the percentage of smokers were extremely high—it was already a common theme seeing the exhaled smoke float around the conference room.

"I suppose silence means consent…it's fine, right?"

Even so, the smoke today was extremely severe. Ronan Marcenas waved his hand to shake off the smoke, and looked at the faces of the crowd seated around the round table.

"The military has also observed the destruction of the 'L1 Junction'. The "Nahel Argama" is currently headed to the shoal space region, and a Neo Zeon fleet is out in full arms to ambush this. From this, we can conclude that there's a high chance of the " Laplace Box" being in the shoal space region."

32 members of the Senate Council were gathered at the 111 meeting room in the Dakar Senate Headquarters, and the ranks, led by Ronan on the Upper House Chairman seat, were the cadres of the respective ruling parties, their sleep disheveled hair and droopy eyes lingering in the smoke. The time was GMT 0500 and 2 hours had passed since the phone call notifying them about an emergency meeting. The Settlement Issues Council, the bipartisan organization which deals with the many issues regarding Spacenoids, sends them to the Senate for clean up, and decided the fates of the Spacenoids that numbered in more than millions—they were what the media called the shadow parliament. It was not rare for them, who had such great responsibility, to gather in the middle of the night, and because of the terrorist attack on Dakar, many senators were already gathered here, which meant that there were no absentees. But when dealing with the topic at hand, many

of them looked dull and unreliable, completely different from how they were when they were pulling votes.

All of them gave extremely awkward expressions, merely puffing smoke out, giving expressions that clearly showed they did not want to make decisions. It was true this was a common theme people would do when starting a meeting, but the topic at hand was not ordinary. *These guys know this already,* Ronan cursed in his heart. They knew that the strange happenings that had been around this past month were all because of the "Laplace Box", and they knew that the end of all these events was right in front of them. He knew that all of them inherited their current positions from their ancestors, covering the secret of the "Box" together. *In this sense, we're the ones who have to clear the 100-year lie.*

"In that case, please hurry in the mobilization of the space army and seal off the shoal space region. We'll eliminate the Neo Zeon fleet, return the "Nahel Argama" to our military, secure the " Laplace Box" and then bring it under our governance. We've decided on what we have to do, and if nobody's going to propose a plan B, I want to discuss about how to execute it. What do you think?"

The situation continued to develop during this time. It was an undisclosed meeting with guards keeping a tight watch, and Ronan still felt repulsed about having to mention the "Box" over and over again, but he could not let the senators look on with sleepy eyes. He said it with the intention of waking them up, but their responses were still slow. In the midst of this silence, when the sound of the clock ticking could ostensibly be heard, "It's easier said than done to mobilize the entire army to maintain

security." A senator, who was also the president of the ruling party's construction ministry, let out this vague voice,

"Looking at the nature of this incident, we mustn't reveal this to the world, and we won't be able to satisfy the condition of mobilizing the army. What do we do?"

"And Muar's the current legislation chief!" The senator in charge of agriculture leaned on his seat beside the other man. "I don't think the legislation council will agree easily, especially with the media raising the issues of the Second Neo Zeon war to shake the hearts of the people. If we're to mobilize a large force, they'll be looks from the people of the world."

All their stares were gathered on John Bauer, seated opposite Ronan. This important man from the national defense committee, reputed to be the cause of shaking the hearts of the people, did not mind the blaming stares as he continued to look aloof. Ronan held back his sigh, "It's because of this…" he probed his body onto the table as he said.

"It's because Senator Bauer paved the path for us that it's easier for us to mobilize the enemy. The recent spate of terrorist attacks has caused public opinion to lean towards the eradication of Neo Zeon. With the assistance of everyone here, I suppose we can break down the interference of the legislation council, right?"

Of course, these were not sincere words, all of them knew that Bauer's actions were only to ensure the continual existence of Londo Bell, which his helped set up, an act for the sake of maintaining the military industry. Ronan did not continue to look

at Bauer, who deliberately looked away, and looked at the faces of all those present. “Isn’t this too much of a wishful thinking?” One of the six female senators interrupted as she put out the cigarette on the ash tray.

“The media does adore Neo Zeon as they are biased towards Spacenoids. They’re still insisting on that old logic, saying that the source of all the mishaps is the incompetence of the Federation.”

“And it was just revealed that ECOAS was involved in the battle of “Palau”.”

“Using the term eradicate is very…the initial plan was to settle all issues gradually with the dissolvement of the Republic, right? If we’re going to do such an extreme action at this time, won’t we end up obstructing the space army realignment plan and have no support in this end?”

“The Vist Foundation has a clear view on all this, which is why they can control the Senate Council however they want to. How about we give up on ensuring the “Box” at this time and try leaving it again? If the “Box” is going to be opened, the Foundation will be grabbed by the throat.”

“But what Chairman Ronan said about this being a good chance to take them down is true. They’re fighting over a family squabble now, and they haven’t formally decided on a leader, right?”

“You say it as if it’s easy. If Neo Zeon is defeated, your party will be the first one to ask for a revision over the realignment plan, right?”

"You've been insisting that the money used to build a mobile suit can build many old folks homes, right?"

"This is already the instinctive action of the largest opposition party; it's a different theme from what we're talking about."

This barefaced saying caused a tired amusement to ripple through the Senate room. Ronan slammed his fist into the table to negate that uneasy tremor.

"People, I hope you can understand the importance of this incident."

The members hid their smiles and went quiet as they gathered their stares on the Chairman. Ronan cupped his aching fist with his other hand as he looked at the stares of the many people through the smoke of the cigarettes.

"We've been protecting the secret of the "Box". The meaning of the existence of this Senate Council, the authority that can decide the Spacenoid administrations are all based on this. In the aspect of wanting to get power in our hopes to secure the "Box", we're on the same path as the Vist Foundation."

Ronan stood up without letting anyone have the room to argue back. The photos of the Council Chairmans hanging on the wall entered his eyes, "Sometimes, I wonder…" and he immediately looked away to say calmly,

"If Zeon grew prosperous before the One Year War began, and if I took up this position before that, what would I do? Will I open the promised future in the "Box" to prevent Zeon's insurgence?"

All the people seated at the round seat inadvertently felt chills and turned their faces away in an awkward manner. Ronan continued to look at the photos of the past Chairmans that had never changed, exchanged a short glance with his already deceased father, "Of course, the answer is no." he answered himself and lowered his stare.

"Our fathers had this thought before, and continued to implement silence to protect the regimentation of the Federation inherited from our forefathers. But in the end, the One Year War happened. 'Zeon assault can't be predicted', or 'these happened before we knew about the existence of the "Box"', we can't use them as excuses. If we wanted to prevent them, we might have been able to do so, but the Senate Council sat by to watch half of humanity killed, and has the same crime as Zeon."

"That's…" an elderly senator spoke with a bitter smile. "Don't tell me you never thought of it." Ronan hushed up the other man, and slowly strolled down the circumference of the round table.

"And we, who had the complete inheritance, are unable to acquit ourselves of this crime. This is a guilt we have to bear forever, and we're not allowed to bring it into our graves. As long as the Earth Federation continues to existence, we will have to bear the secret that taints our descendants with blood."

Riddhe's expression when he learnt the truth in that office lit by the sunset appeared for a fleeting moment in Ronan's eyes. There were people putting their elbows on the table as they leaned forward, and there were those leaning on their chairs as they looked into space. They were children, but also parents; Ronan looked around and stared at the faces of these people, "This isn't something we can leave it to others." He continued, and set aside the face in his memory.

"It'll be best if we can use this chance to get the "Box" and bury it completely. However, the more pressing thing is to maintain the current situation and prevent anyone from approaching the "Box". This isn't the time to consider the benefits for our political parties, or even our personal problems; we have a mission to protect this secret, and we're betting on the billions of lives that died during the One Year War."

He circled the round table once, and placed his hand on the Chairman's seat that appeared in front of his eyes again. "I hope that we'll have a fruitful discussion after we consider all these." Ronan concluded and let his heavier body sink into the seat.

Nobody wanted to look at each other or speak up, but even so, the political considerations and the forces, tangible and intangible, supporting the council were not to be ignored. He thought of the costs and benefits of the options, whether it was necessary to protect the "Box" in such an adhersive manner, and compared it to the current reality; in the end, tired breaths merely came out with the smoke, and a silent time proceeded. At this moment, John Bauer lifted his head and spoke up for the first time on this day, "I can understand your concerns, Chairman Ronan." Ronan had no

intention of accepting the words of this old friend and colleague as he looked back with a wary look.

"But we're able to get to the lowest seat of this senate because of the support of the people. If we act while ignoring the wills of the supporting parties, we won't be able to fulfill the mission you said of, Chairman. At this situation, we need to first calm down and make our decisions—"

"What if Neo Zeon gets the "Box" while we're doing so? Do you think you can use political means to overturn the Second Coming of Char? It's rumored that that man has relations with the Republic."

"That's the point. If the Republic's supporting from behind, there's still room for negotiations, like the delay of self-autonomy or something…"

"And what if they ask for inordinate requests? It's fine to continue keeping your votes for the sake of maintaining the needs for war, but I don't want a replay of the One Year War to happen again."

"You're too hasty in your conclusions. No matter whether it has the "Box" or not, Zeon's fate is flickering in the windlike a candle. It is rude of me to say so, Chairman Ronan, but aren't you being a little too paranoid? It seems that you're overrating the existence of the "Box"."

Bauer said with an emotionless expression, and there were several senators around them showing looks that they understood

this very well as they looked at Ronan. These unexpected words rendered Ronan speechless, and he suspected if these words were of reality as he looked back at Bauer's face wordlessly.

Bauer was the head of the Defense Ministry, based in the Anaheim Electronics, and would be the one most scared of the opportunists' words when the space army realignment program were to be subjected to setback, but Ronan never thought that he would say this was just paranoid. *Is he saying the restraining bolt and sacrifices over these hundred years were all the result of paranoia? Is he saying that the world won't change no matter whether the "Box" is opened? That the tragedy of the One Year War will never be avoided no matter what? Do we fear something that has no value, threatening those who did not know its true identity? Are we flaunting our authority without purpose?*

Impossible. The moment Ronan concluded, he had a fleeting thought this might be the case, and he temporarily felt the feeling of being dangled in the air. To a man like Bauer—the intangible block called the public, that firm, incomprehensible and entity might be the case. The words carved on the "Box" might just be a chain of words, and it itself had no power to change the world. The "Box" could only fulfill its power that can topple the current regimentation with the help of those people with the hearts to respond to the 'promised future'. He knew all about this, but he continued to fear the "Box"; was it because he was a direct member of the Marcenas family that had a direct involvement in the "Box", or was he feeling somewhat melancholic about the dream of the 'promised future' that still lingered in his heart? Ronan could not conclude as he looked forward with a stiff mask.

At this moment, he discovered that the door at the edge of his vision was opened.

The door was forbidden to be opened until the meeting was over. Ronan looked over at the door together with everyone else, who turned around in shock, saw the face of a woman who passed through the door the guards opened without any concerns, and felt his gulped breath stuck at his throat

"Pardon me for interrupting the meeting."

Martha Vist Carbine said this line to brush off the many stares on her as she walked over. *Why is this woman here?* Ronan glared at the guards standing at the door, looked at the officer's uniform that proceeded into the room, and gasped again. There were three large stars on the rank, reflecting the light off his shoulders; this was not the first time Ronan saw the officer, and the latter overwhelmed the guards with his authority as he entered. This face belonged to the man, the Chief of Staff for the entire Federation military.

Even though he was the leader of the army brass that was under the command of the Senate Council, it would require lots of courage for him to enter this room. Ronan looked at the stiff expression of this Admiral, ascertained that he had the same interests as that of the Foundation, and turned his stare towards Martha, who was walking to the Chairman's seat. This was probably the first time they met face to face, but Ronan did not feel this way. It felt as if they both involved the military, and Ronan had been able to see this face all this time. Perhaps Martha too felt the same way as she gave a thin smile, her eyes showing a trace of

closeness, and she brought her face close to Ronan's eyes. The tobacco stench filling the room faded away, and what came was a sharp agitating scent of perfume stimulating around his nostrils.

"I have something urgent to talk about, Chairman Ronan. Can I have a word with you?"

"Sorry, but we're in the middle of an emergency meeting as well. Do say anything you want here, but keep it short."

Ronan did not look away from the Senator who were scrutinizing him, and answered her with an unhushed voice. He had a thought ingrained deep within him, that if she were to gain the initiative here, everyone else would have an opportunity. Martha however smiled with an expression, indicating that she knew beforehand. "You understand too, right?" she muttered again.

"It's useless to talk with these people. The "Box" is our family's issue, and we have to settle it ourselves."

Ronan resisted the urge to raise his eyebrows as he continued to stare at Martha, who narrowed her eyes as she seemed to have witnessed the proceedings in the meeting. "I have a secret way to deal with this." she spoke without leaving an opening.

"If you allow us, Chairman, this plan can be executed immediately. Do you have any interest?"

"…You're asking the obvious. This isn't something a lady should be doing."

"Women always want to be certain, especially when we're lacking in time."

She said sweetly, but there was a sense of urgency deep within her eyes. Martha too was anxious, and nobody other than her could experience this urgency to prevent the "Box" from being opened. Ronan sighed heavily, looked around at the faces that amounted more than 30, trying to find an opportunity to grasp a foothold, and used this chance to get up from the Chairman's seat.

"I'll be back." He said to the vice-chairman beside him, but understood very well that he would not be coming back. He followed Martha out as the latter proceeded first, and walked out of the meeting room. He sensed the cold atmosphere of the term secret method, and as he felt goosebumps rise on his skin, he passed through the door. The unnerving expressions of the past chairmans caused his back to ache more than the cold stares of the other senators.

Part 2

The 3 dimension holographic map shown on the main monitor showed a straight arrow of light from the bottom to the top, intersecting an arrow reaching in from the left side. The intersection point let out a red flickering light, and the side showed the estimated time of arrival and the closest distance values.

"This is the predicted path of the Tennyson fleet from Side 6. We just sent out a laser communicator signal 6 hours ago, so the values shouldn't be wrong."

Flaste Schole said. Since this was the man who was part of the crew that occupied the "Nahel Argama" just 5 hours ago, and intended to work with that fleet, there was no greater prediction than this. Otto Mitas got up from his Captain's seat, and looked carefully at the many markers flickering on the monitor. Liam Borrinea and the other bridge crew held their breaths as they stared at the enemy's fleet blocking their path.

"There are 9 Musaka-class ships, and another 6 different disguised ships of all sizes. They're not holding bac on this large attack at all, and if we keep this up, we'll face them head on in the shoal space region. The ETA is 08:17…less than 3 hours."

Flaste said as he looked at his watch and then looked over at Otto. *Are you serious?* The latter avoided the stare as he gave this expression, and proceeded to ask his sensor operator, "What's the movement of Frontal's squadron?" The operator started to work on the console Flaste worked on before,

"Looking at the final observations of the optical sensors, it seems they're planning to meet with their own fleet. Considering the durability of the subflight systems, I don't think they'll head straight to "Industrial 7"."

"What about Frontal's mothership, the "Rewloola"?"

"It's outside our range. I don't know where Frontal's fleet launched from, but looking at the plug-in fuel tanks of the SFS, my guess is that they're 80,000km away from the main fleet. It'll take them half a day to proceed here at maximum speed."

"I heard that the "Rewloola" is bringing 2 Musaka-classes along . Maybe they don't intend to meet up with Tennyson's fleet, but is headed to "Industrial 7" straight away. In this case, Frontal may use the "Rewloola" as a base to look for the "Box"."

Flaste continued, and while Otto noticed the side of the man's face that stood beside them complete, *this man is younger than he looks* he wondered about this completely unimportant thing. " What do you think, First Officer?" he turned behind to look, and Liam, with her hand on her injured shoulder, "It's very likely." She answered without hesitation.

"Once the squad regroups, they'll head straight for "Industrial 7 ". There's a chance they'll be stranded, but that's a fine move not to scatter their forces. That man will definitely do it."

"In that case, we'll have to face one large fleet."

The Captain's simple summation of the entire situation brought a heavy and silent atmosphere upon the bridge. It had been more than 5 hours since they left the collapsed 'L1 Junction' and head off to the shoal space region. They did not have any time to think as they were too busy detaining the Zeon Republic soldiers in the ship and restoring the operations of each department, but at this point, the pressure came right at them. Otto felt abnormally awake due to the extreme sleep deprivation, and looked at the markers shown on the screen. While the "Nahel Argama" was wounded, almost devoid of its remaining ammunitions and transport vehicles, there were 15 enemy ships. He knew, without anyone

reminding him, how reckless it was. “Aid from Londo Bell…I don’t think we can hope for it.” Liam’s passing words brought a heaviness worth sighing over beside Otto’s ears.

“Yeah. We’re the ones being hunted down by the entire military, and Fleet Commander Bright is being redeployed. There’s no one we can reason with; if we’re not careful, we might even be attacked.”

“But we know the location of the “Box”. As long as we report there’s a threat that Neo Zeon will capture it, Londo Bell can act independently, right?”

Mihiro Oiwakken said as she sat on the communication operator seat. Her firm expression showed that there was a need to say this, and Otto was dumbstruck by this. “It’s useless.” However, Liam first spoke up,

“If we don’t know the true identity of the “Box”, there’s no way we can determine the threat it brings. If we want Londo Bell to take action, it’ll have to be once we confirm the contents.”

“How can that be…! In that case—”

“There’s no room for us to make a detour and avoid the enemy’s ambush. If we don’t hurry to “Industrial 7” as soon as possible, Frontal will reach there first.”

Liam spoke with a voice not allowing for any optimism, and turned her stare to the Captain's seat. Otto looked at her eyes that showed that she was ready to go all in, "How many mobile suits are we going to expect?" he asked Flaste.

"The maximum capacity for the Musaka-class is 6, and the disguised ships have varying ones, but they can probably hold about 3 or so."

"In other words…" the sensor operator looked up at the screen, ostensibly calculating in his mind, "…72 of them." and went pale,

"The only ones we can deploy are the "ReZEL", the "Stark Jegan" and the "Unicorn". They outnumber us 24 to 1…"

Liam muttered, and Otto felt the chill of despair rise from below his feet, creating a freezing atmosphere. "No, it's 12 to 1." He said as he left the Captain's seat.

"We can still mobilize another 3 units."

His magnetic soles landed on the floor, and he looked back at the stunned faces of everyone present. "The "Kshatriya"?" Liam asked in lieu of every person present, and Otto affirmed it with his stare.

"What about the other two?" The ECOAS "Lotos" can't be counted in this as they can only replace the cannons."

With Liam giving a suspicious look, Otto turned his back on her and looked towards Flaste, who seemed to have realized this. He

approached Flaste and asked, “Can you help?” As the latter’s face cringed, Mihiro ostensibly swallowed some words and looked away.

“Your “Geara Zulus” are still around, and though one of them lost an arm, but it can still defend a ship, I suppose?”

“…Is this really alright? It’s said that those who betrayed once will do so again.”

Flaste answered with a bitter smile as he lowered his face. Otto too lowered his head as he looked at the expression devoid of any smiling intent. “I won’t force you.” He said as he reached his hand to touch his cap.

“We’ll immediately send a launch that will depart for the Republic’s army. You can ride on board and leave this ship as well. It’s all your ship.”

Flaste widened his eyes as he averted them, and lifted his head as if he was had. Otto however did not look at him as he turned to Liam and the rest, “The same goes for the rest as well.” He spoke with a voice that bellowed through the bridge.

“I said before that there’s no need to accompany me to my death over such a foolish thing, and this feeling remains the same even at this point. For those who want to leave the ship, I’ll lend a launch. Just tell me. In this space region, there’ll be a ship who can receive a distress signal immediately.”

The navigation and cannons operators seated at the consoles in front wordlessl looked over Liam's shoulders and stared at Otto. *If I don't want to lose anyone else, how can I lose anyone?* Otto suppressed the true thoughts rising in his heart, "But those who want to stay, please be prepared." he continued and looked at everyone present.

"We're the only ones present. As for whether we want to take action, or whether this is the correct decision, we have to decide it itself. Everyone has to think and make their own decisions. I won't charge you on your responsibilities as a soldier, but the responsibility you need to take up should be in your hearts."

There were people with unfaltering looks, and there were those who looked down in doubt. Once he was certain of their reactions, "Notify the ship. I hope all personnel leaving the ship are to gather at the deck in 20 minutes." Otto finally turned to Mihiro and said this, and the petite figure answered in a flustered manner as she looked away. Otto removed his cap, let the wind blow on his heating head, and walked towards the window in front of him without looking at anyone else in the eyes.

There was still some distance to the shoal space region, and the "Nahel Argama" was surrounded by a stretch of endless space, without any space debris passing by. *The "Laplace Box" that had the power to topple the world, the Second Coming of Char, the "Unicorn Gundam" that was the key to opening the "Box"*—he reflected on the things that had nothing to do with him a month ago, wondered about how peculiar it was, and looked at the stars afar. His wife's face appeared in his mind, but it did not bring about the pain he

imagined; *there goes my retirement funds* this self-depreciating voice was the only thing that echoed in his heart.

Part 3

The aft landing deck was as its name described, a one-way passage used for transport craft to return to the ship, but it also had a function to let small launchs fly off. The insides and external appearances were not too different from the catapult deck, but the scene of the 4 old-styled launchses docked on both ends of this extremely tall deck resembled the idiosyncratic atmosphere of a a mobile suit hangar.

At this point, two of these launches were dragged to the middle of the airlock, and a group of men dressed in thick green normal suits were boarding the launch. It was under zero gravity, but the feet of those 30 men or more were abnormally heavy. It felt as if their bodies were srinking for every step they took with their magnetic soles. There were guards wielding recoiless rifles standing around them, giving watchful stares at the group boarding the launch. However, anyone could tell they were not going to do anything.

They—the Zeon Republic soldiers, lost. They lost their motherships, their comrades, and were to be divided into two launches and abandoned into space. Banagher Links did not dare to say he could understand the attitude of a soldier, as what their ideals entails were completely beyond his imagination, but their dangling expressions gave him a rough sense of familiarity. He looked at the faces of those soldiers who were most in their twenties sidelong. 'Disjointed'…this would most likely be the term

that could explain their psychological mood. They could not associate themselves with the current reality; even though they were present, there was a sense of isolation—

"We're included the water and food for the mobile suits that are floating around. Once you leave the ship, please proceed to save them. The 'L1 Junction' collapse meant that the military and media will get into action. There'll be a ship that will save you here."

Audrey Burne spoke to the Sub-Lieutenant acting as representative for the Republic soldiers. She had removed her regal cape, but she was still dressed in formal Neo Zeon uniform, and this must have been one of the reasons why the Republic soldiers felt disjointed. Banagher, Conroy Haagensen and Gael Chan were sending them off in name, but their faces were giving off uneasy looks as they stared at Audrey from behind. "Yes…" The sub-lieutenant looked down as he answered, looked back at their one and only royal heir Mineva Zabi, and then looked around with a lost expression.

"…None of the crew on this ship is leaving."

It had been almost 30 minutes since the broadcast to gather all departers echoed through the ship. The Sub-Lieutenant saw that no one else was going to leave from this landing deck, and looked back at Audrey. "Why?" He asked with a troubled expression.

"It's suicidal to take on the main fleet of the "Sleeves" as a single ship, so why…what do you believe in? The Side

co-prosperity ring the Second Coming of Char described about will bring a whole new future to Spacenoids, but why, as the Princess of Zeon, are You denying this—"

"I'm not denying it. if there's really this ideal, it's possible to try it in this world. However, I can't accept using the power of the " Laplace Box" to simply protect ourselves."

Audrey silently answered as she stood unflinchingly on the deck. The Sub-Lieutenant was the highest ranked amongst the stragglers, but he was still considered a youth. Banagher saw his face contort sidelong, and his mouth kept shuddering, but he was speechless.

"The world will change, and it has to change. Thus, when we change, we have to be change cautiously. If we want to change simply because we're unhappy about the state of the world, that's no different from a child crying in the darkness. We need to open our eyes wide and walk towards the path with the light…once you do that, and once you think of using the light you see to spread it through the entire world, that's when you need to summon the courage to take action."

Audrey's words were clear. It was true that if he felt 'disjointed' by the world and hoped for changes, he could not fear his own change. Banagher deeply felt his heart engraved by this change over this past month or so, and it resonated with her words. He gently clenched his palms as the blood of life flowed to his fingertips, and made his decision not to be lost again as he looked

forward. “Change yourself first, you say…?” The Sub-Lieutenant asked, and she nodded back, “This is my personal view.” Audrey smiled.

“Even if the crew on this ship have their different thoughts, there is one thing we all believe in.”

“And that is…?”

“We won’t die, and we won’t lose, for the beast of possibilities will protect us.”

“The beast…of possibilities…” The Sub-Lieutenant repeated these words, and seemed to have recalled something as he looked back. Banagher inadvertently cringed his chin back and adjusted his posture. The Sub-Lieutenant looked at the pilot suit Banagher had been wearing since the previous night, and lowered his face weakly. “Were we wrong…” he said with a practically vanishing voice.

“That’s not something I can decide. The outcome of the upcoming battle will most likely change the direction of the Zeon Republic greatly, but no matter what this outcome is, you’re the ones supporting the country. Don’t be lost because of other people’s words, including mine.”

The Sub-Lieutenant lowered his head and bit his lips hard, before straightening his back to look at Audrey’s face. His slightly damp eyes ostensibly reflected the light off the deck, his heels clicked as he brought them together, and he stood still with a proper salute as he stood on the deck.

"You're our Queen after all."

He did not wait for a return salute, and turned around to walk towards the launch his subordinates were in. They were about to head back to their country, and would certainly face a cruel fate. They would definitely be court-martialled, and even worse, there was the possibility that the Defense Minister would shut them up to hide his involvement with Neo Zeon. However, this prediction would not be able to scare the Sub-Lieutenant at this moment. Banagher watched him leave, and Audrey stood there adamantly, her back etched deeply into his eyes. The Sub-Lieutenant did not say anything else as he left the scene.

He went past the airlock of the landing deck, and went right towards the container block behind the partition wall. The beast of possibilities, the "Unicorn", was inside there. What he could do at this moment was just to prepare it for everything. He seemed to sense the blurry hot air flowing in the ship clear up, injecting life into his body and mind again. Banagher was driven by this emotion as he floated out to the container block.

The containers of all sizes were fastened along the partition wall , and this place not only contained the spare supplies, but also became a storage for the supplies the "Garencieres" brought in. at this point, all the mechanics were mobilized and transporting the goods. As the sounds of the cranes and sirens activated resonated, the cargo carrier moved the black barrel of the Beam Gatling gun. " Okay, it's fine!" A familiar voice was mixed in the metallic sounds, and Banagher stepped off the floor to float there. "Takuya!" He

called out. “Oh!” Takuya Irei in turn raised his hand, grabbed Banagher by the leg as the latter was almost about to go past him, and pulled the cargo palette over in a refined manner.

“Can the Full Armor Plan work?”

“We’re letting Mr Aaron do the final analysis. Don’t worry, we’ ll make it in time for the final battle.”

He showed the grin of a veteran mechanic, and soon after, “ How’s the fastening?” he heard a yell, and shrugged his shoulders. “It’s done!” He shouted with all he had, “Let’s move out!” and the cargo carrier ferrying the 6 Beam Gatling guns rumbled. “Go and get some rest first.” Takuya said, and his back faded away. The cargo carrier moving down the rail on the floor was headed to the large gate with the opened shutter; on the other end was a wide mobile suit deck space with fresh burn marks after a fire. The Beam Gatling guns that were moved would probably be equipped onto the “Unicorn”, as according to Takuya’s plan to increase its armaments, and were to fulfill their purposes as indispensable parts in forming the “Full Armor Unicorn”.

These were originally Neo Zeon weapons that were docked on the “Garencieres”, and it was proven in battle that they were highly compatible with the “Unicorn”, but they did not know whether there would be any troubles if they were to activate many of them at one go. This was not the time to rest, and Banagher was intending to follow the cargo carrier to the mobile suit deck. “ Follow his advice and rest.” But a voice came from above, causing

him to lift his head and look over. *Miss Marida,* before he could speak up, the soft profile dressed in pilot suit filled his sights, and the body floating in the air slowly descended to the floor.

"I understand that you can't calm down, but you're the ace of this ship. If you don't act composed, everyone else will feel uneasy ."

She did not look away as she supported Banagher, whose feet did not land on the floor, and spoke. The voice and attitude was undoubtedly that of Marida Cruz, who once shared her soul with him. His shoulder that was grabbed let out a jolt, and his body relaxed unconditionally; was this because of the sensation back then lingered in his heart, or was it a biological phenomenon of his body being unrestrained. Banagher scented the sweetness of her body aroma that was different from Audrey's, looked away awkwardly, and forced out a line, "How can that be, Miss Marida, you're…" Marida showed a smile.

"The "Kshatriya" can't stand on the frontline now, because you beat it up real good."

The casual reply caused the sweet atmosphere to subside. She was brought to Earth, her soul was toyed with, her body was tortured, she was forced to fight against her will, and fell to the brink of death. The one opportunity that caused her to experience this month of pain was definitely the moment when she went up against the berserk "Unicorn". The machine, and even Marida herself could not be said to be completely fine. Upon thinking

about this, Banagher lowered his head with a wordless expression. "I'm joking. Don't make such an expression." Marida noted wryly and prodded him on the head.

"I'll be your rearguard. The forward needs to have strength and stamina, so just go and sleep, even if it's for 30 minutes."

"Alright then…erm, Miss Marida, did you speak with the Captain?"

The reason why he suddenly asked this was probably because it was rare to see her talk so much. The back that was about to leave jerked, and she turned her head around slightly. "he's still in the detention room?" She spoke with a barely audible voice, and as Banagher nodded, he realized that Zinnerman had been avoiding him too.

"Go talk with him."

Marida said quietly as her back was turned to him. "But…" Banagher's reply was filled with doubt. "I suppose this is for the better." The sidelong face looking afar suppressed Banagher's voice that was about to give a suggestion.

"Some things can only be said easily amongst men, right?"

She spoke with a voice not hoping for any answers, and the back profile kicked the floor and left. Marida grabbed the Beam Gatling gun that just passed by from above and said something to the mechanic. Banagher did not look at her again and he looked at the airlock on the starboard partition wall. He recalled the path

leading to the detention room in the gravity block, and his emotions felt heavy, creating a feeling that he could not lift his soles.

He got off the elevator, and there was a weak rumbling sound from the aft, shaking the body that had become a prisoner to gravity slightly. The launch the Republic soldiers were on had probably left. A moment of tranquil returned to the gravity block, and nothing could be heard other than the the cylinder creating the centrifuge gravity. Banagher felt his body become heavier for every step he took, and walked down the passage that still had some gunpowder stench. The room he was headed to was about 30m in front of him, down the round gradual arching corridor.

Nobody ordered Zinnerman to enter the room, and the door was not locked, but he would not come out. He went in, locked the metal door, and remained silent without talking to anyone. Banagher stood in front of the metal door covering the presence of a human within like the other detention rooms, and wanted to look inside and see the situation inside; however, he frowned because he realized his own timidity. He took a deep breath, knocked on the door as a matter of formality, and opened it without waiting for a response.

There were cushions all over the detention room's walls, meant to prevent self-mutilation, and was often kept dark to save power. Suberoa Zinnerman was leaning on the wall, spacing out as he sat down, ostensibly clasping onto a shadow in the dimness. He remained unmoved even as the light shone in from the door, and merely rolled his eyes to look at Banagher. Banagher exerted strength into his lower body, steadied himself from being pushed

aside by that pressure, and stared at Zinnerman's black eyes standing at the door.

"The escape launch was used."

Banagher let out these unexpected words from his opened mouth, and went silent for a while. Zinnerman blinked two, three times, and lowered his head in an ostensibly disinterested manner.

"If you want to stay here, go up to the bridge. We're going to meet the Neo Zeon fleet. You know some of the internal workings, so you can at least give some suggestions, right?"

It was not the time to talk about such things. Banagher was driven by the rising anxiety that arose with this separation, and grabbed onto the metal grille of the opened door, staying there as he was unable to make the decision and step inside. He looked away from the silent Zinnerman, and looked at the shadow reaching out from his feet. The ship's broadcast seemed to have notified something, but his heart had no room to listen to the contents carefully.

"Miss Marida and Mr Flaste are helping out, but you're hiding in such a place, Captain—"

"I'm no longer Captain."

Banagher was interrupted by this hoarse voice, and lifted his head. Zinnerman continued to look at the wall, the whites of his eyes appearing in the darkness, before the light vanished as he closed his eyelids again.

"My ship's sunk, those guys I'm ordering have disappeared, those who were once my subordinates are now acting on their own judgement."

"IN THAT CASE, WHAT ARE YOU!?"

This voice unwittingly boomed, reaching the cushions on the wall, and vanished without echo. Banagher looked away from Zinnerman, whose face was unmoving like a corpse, and averted his stare towards the dimness beside the door.

"I want to think that we have no relationship now…! But it can't be helped; you're still Captain to me. If I break away from you now, I will disappear."

The body in the darkness let out a trembling presence, but Banagher was not in the mood to ascertain. *Because of you, I can live. Your complicated life told me the truth to this world, your gentleness teaches me to live on even so. Because of such sadness, people continue to live to erase them*—these words were etched deep inside his heart, and even one or two betrayals were unable to erase them. Banagher exerted more strength onto his fingertips on the metal grille, and looked at Zinnerman again,

"You set Marida free and saved Audrey, didn't you? It's a different thing for the others, so why did you—"

"It's not that easy to take the first step from where I was from. There's a price."

Zinnerman interrupted Banagher's words and lifted his face. Banagher was at a loss of words as he looked at the other man sidelong.

"Whether it's the people on this ship, the "Garencieres" team… princess and you, everyone paid the price. Some have given up on their stable lives, their positions as soldiers, the beliefs and pride that had been supporting them, and for some, their lives."

The face of Daguza Mackle flashed by his mind, and the voice of Loni Garvey he heard on the battlefield of Dakar whiffed by fleetingly. These were the lives of those who were not scared of change, and took the first step to save him—Zinnerman's rough hands were cupped together, "I gave up everything." He spoke with a hoarse voice.

"Responsibility, hatred, I abandoned everything that formed myself. What I am now is merely an empty shell. Tell Gael that I don't have any strength to bear responsibility or anything now."

"Tell Mr Gael…?"

"He was the one who asked you to talk to me, right?"

"No, Miss Marida said. She asked if I can talk with you."

The black eyes widened in a faltering manner, letting out a glint deep inside the darkness. "Marida…?" Banagher heard Zinnerman mutter and not do anything after; he truly felt that he could not pass through this door. "I'm losing something gradually for the

sake of change…" he unwittingly muttered in his mouth, and again stared into the gathered darkness. Zinnerman however did not say anything, and he did not lift his head.

"But you managed to get something in return, right?"

There were no more words to be said, and he retreated from the door. "I'll leave this open." Banagher said and left the detention room. He felt a sense of helplessness spread in his heart for every step he took, and returned back to the elevator. The ajar door let out a thin shadow on the empty corridor.

Just when he was about to reach for the elevator button, the door opened. He instinctively retreated, exchanged looks with Audrey inside, and was rooted to the ground by this unexpected situation.

"…How is it?"

She probably realized the reason why he was here, and this short question from her entered his surgent heart. Banagher did not speak up as he merely shook his head. "Is that so…" her muttering was mixed in with a sigh, and she lowered her head slightly as she left the elevator. Banagher did not enter as he remained on this passage devoid of any crowd, and heard the door let out an unexpectedly loud shutting sound.

"I just talked with Flaste. Kwani and Ivan's "Geara Zulus" can be mobilized. We'll have 6 mobile suits."

Audrey spoke as the elevator let out a shutting sound. The sound chased away the heavy atmosphere in the room. “Even so, the enemy outnumbers us 12 to 1.” She continued to explain, her face looking grim. “Thanks for the help.” Banagher’s responding voice became unnatural as a result.

“I’ll continue to call out to the Neo Zeon fleet until the moment we fight. It may be useless, but Captain Otto agreed. He said that since we’re going to point our bows at our comrades, it might be better to do this for the sake of the Garencieres team.”

“It won’t be useless. Your words have power, just like yesterday ’s speech, or the words you said to the Zeon Republic army…I can’ t move people’s hearts like you do.”

I can’t even turn the Captain around. Banagher felt the helplessness filling his heart as he turned his back on Audrey, who showed a surprised expression. He looked upon the gloves that were covered with ash.

These hands are limited in what they do. Everything began the moment I saved Audrey when she floated in the colony space, and there has to be an end—

“That’s why I want to become your shield. No matter what happens, I’ll bring you to “Laplace Box”. I guess that’s the mission the key of the “Box”…the “Unicorn” and I have.”

“Banagher…”

"If you feel the "Box" has such a value, I hope you can use your words to convey the truth. If it's something that brings disaster, it's fine to destroy it. That's what I can only do—"

"I can't do it."

The icy voice pierced from behind, causing him to lose his voice over what he was going to continue with. He closed his mouth, looked over his shoulder, and caught sight of Audrey's face,

"I can't do it alone…"

The narrowed eyes that were ostensibly staring at Banagher were moist. Banagher's voice was stuck in his throat as he wanted to call out to her, and hurriedly looked over; at the same time, Audrey suddenly raised her right hand and grabbed him by the chest.

Her fingernails were poking at the fabric of the pilot suit, and the throbbing came from the fingertips, as the emotions that were ostensibly bottled up to its limit finally gave way. The tremor that resonated with his body was embedded into his body and mind, and he could not help but look back at Audrey's face.

"If I were alone, I won't be able to say anything. If nobody trusted me, nobody had the same wavelength as me…someone to support me, I too would…"

The emerald eyes looked down, and the shoulders with gold embroidery shuddered. There was no actual proof that could support her; if not for the body facilitating the exchange of body

warmth supporting each other, there was no way she could stand on her toes like this—*I nearly threw my all onto her,* this understanding came with a sharp pain that pierced through his body, and he suddenly put his hands on Audrey's. He caught her tilting slender body and lifted her up, using both hands to grab onto her frail body that would break at a single notice.

"…Promise me that you'll definitely come back. Don't leave me alone."

Audrey said, and she did not lift her face buried in Banagher's chest. As he felt her breath reach him through his pilot suit, he embraced her harder, "It's a promise." He answered without hesitation.

"I'm a failure as a Newtype…without you reminding me, I'ld have forgotten that you're Audrey."

"It's good in front of everyone, but only at this moment…"

The little head gave off a sweet fragrance amidst the stench that was filled with gun smoke and ozone from the beams. *You can't return to the 'everyone' you speak of*—he felt the voice of the masked man pass above his hand, trying to take away the warmth from his arms. He reached his hands for Audrey's face, ostensibly caressing her face as he lifted it.

What he finally saw were tears flowing down from the sealed eyelids hiding the emerald eyes. Banagher embraced Audrey by the shoulders, and let their lips touch. *They're really soft*— this sensation had melted his nerves, and their body warmth became

one as it circulated in them. The bodies became one, ignoring the air on the empty corridor, and released heat with both of them at the center, causing a warm field to spread around them.

Part 4

(I suppose it can be said we were had. The final destination is " Industrial 7"…the "Magallanica".)

The laser communication signal sent from within the ship was not stable as the ship they were on was moving at the fastest battle speed. After sending many mails over, he finally managed to make contact with Martha, and the noise was so heavy even the expressions were hard to tell. "Yes." Alberto Vist answered as he looked at the dimness behind him.

There was no one else in the communication room of the " General Revil", and 7 hours passed since the "Banshee" launched. Riddhe Marcenas was practically fused into the darkness several days ago, and at this point, he was in the vast sea of stars several thousand kilometers wide—

(I think it was three years ago when the construction of the " Magallanica" was completed. This self-navigating space colony builder was built to develop the Jupiter Celestial Sphere…I thought Cardeas moved the house there out of his own romantic nostalgia.)

"So he moved the Founder's cryo when renovating it—I feel this might be a more appropriate way of stating it. Maybe the construction of the "Magallanica" itself was part of the plan to release the "Box"."

Alberto leaned on the chair, answering Martha who sounded like she was complaining, and started to feel this was a possibility too. The year after the "Magallanica" was completed, the plan to construct the "Unicorn", the initial phase of the UC plan started. That was the same year when the psycoframe was being experimented for its practicality, and the unwanted test machine—the "Sinanju", was stolen by the "Sleeves". In fact, that was a supply disguised as a pirate raid, and though Alberto himself was the one who planned this, Cardeas must have predicted this, set his plan, and decided on a method to hide the " Box" and hand it over.

Anaheim offered its assistance to Neo Zeon and maintained a ' stability amidst this tense atmosphere' system for itself to survive; during this time, a secular group in the Federation tried to eradicate Zeonism, and pushed for the space realignment plan while the Zeon Republic was about to be dissolved. Cardeas saw that the Vist Foundation and the Settlement Issues Council had differing standpoints, and used his actions to act as a common disagreement for both parties before waiting to move. This may be how he skillfully blurred his plan.

Create a new conflict and maintain the authority of the Vist Foundation and Anaheim Electronics—this was not his aim; Cardeas had other aims when he thought of opening the "Box".

Alberto was fatigued by this understanding that was ostensibly out of instinct, and felt fear as he felt as if he was thrown into the unknown darkness. He turned his pale face to the communication monitor, (I let someone check through it before!) Martha sounded anxious as she ruffled her blond hair roughly.

(I did attend the completion ceremony, and I witnessed the movement of the mansion personally. The yard I grew up on actually has the "Laplace Box" in it…can you imagine?)

"I investigated through the intel data of the "Magallanica". If we're looking at the construct, there's no sign of any special works underneath the house. Maybe it's a disguise job done by the Founder's direct organization, and the colony association manager may be an accomplice."

(It's probably the vice-chairman of the Foundation, Uncle Julst. Looking at his personality, it's not weird for him to help Cardeas… in this case, we'll have to look into something else.)

Martha was biting her fingernails, ostensibly thinking of the management team that wanted to take her down, and her face resembled the queen in a fairy tale who was told by the magic mirror she was dying. *Maybe it's all over.* These passive words appeared in Alberto's slurred mind. (How's your situation there?) Upon hearing Martha's voice, he hurriedly lifted his head.

"We're late here. The "Banshee" is hurrying there, but the Neo Zeon fleet will reach the "Nahel Argama" first. We'll look at the developments of the battle, and will probably interfere with their battle. Its location makes it hard to reach "Industrial 7" first."

(It's a complete defeat on our part to withdraw all people involved with the Foundation from "Industrial 7". If anyone's around, maybe we could have sent it into the "Magallanica" first.)

"What about the Anaheim related people off to repair the colony?"

(They're not related to the Foundation. Even if we let them handle the media, they're not people who can approach the "Box" …when will the "General Revil" reach there?)

"Another 8 hours. We can only leave it to the "Banshee" for now."

If Martha knew the pilot was the eldest son of the Marcenas family, what expression would she have? Alberto suddenly thought of this, and felt surprised by the lack of tentativeness in his heart, and looked at Martha in the eyes as they were contorted due to the noise. On a closer look, her eyes were showing wrinkles that were matching her age, and as he saw this and again felt something end, (It can't be helped.) Martha muttered, her expression showing a cold glint.

(The "Nahel Argama" and Neo Zeon are getting too close to the "Box", and we can't bet on uncertain factors. It looks like we have to use our final option.)

"Final option…?"

(I contacted Chairman Ronan; until the end of this incident, the Foundation will work together with the Settlement Issues Council.

I told the Captain through the Senate Council that the "General Revil" is not to approach too close to "Industrial 7".)

The glint beneath the noise was more chilling than the sudden news. The overly strong noise was not because of reception issues on his side; Alberto realized at this point that Martha was probably on the move too, and gasped when he realized her destination. She , who should be in the Far East base on earth, was headed with Ronan Marcenas to somewhere—

"Are you going to use that…!?"

There was no other guesses to be made, and Alberto inadvertently got up from the console. (So you already knew.) Martha said calmly.

(We must prevent the "Box" from being released. In the worst case, even if we have to destroy the "Box" itself…)

"Destroying the key is one thing, but if you destroy the "Box"… ! And the moment to call back the "Banshee" is—"

(The fact that the Foundation and the Federation is working together to eradicate the "Box" will become a whole new basis of coexistence for us.)

The stare looking through the monitor did not move, and Martha spoke with a lecturing tone. "As for the "Banshee", we can only treat it as a bare minimum sacrifice, though I do feel sorry for the puppet inside.)

She spoke without any trace of emotion, and reclaimed her demonic expression, showing a firm glint amidst the flying noise. *Puppet,* this term overlapped the blue glass-like eyes, and Alberto's body floated from the chair with nowhere else to head to. The ' final method' would not be picky about what it destroys. The "Box ", she; they would all be destroyed from this world. He could touch it if he were a step closer, and he came here for this particular reason—

(Let's just wait for the "Banshee" first. If it defeats the "Unicorn ", we have a chance to take the "Box" back. Let's see what it can do .)

The bright red lips throbbed, showing her bewitching smile like usual. Alberto felt the situation was gradually slipping out of control.

Part 5

The duty crew on the bridge was dressed in heavy normal suits, and they were seated at their consoles; this was a common atmosphere to Mineva Lao Zabi, who spent her infancy in battleships. She passed through the door, immediately faced Otto, who was seated on the Captain's seat, and her body that was dressed in white normal suit just like them moved to the middle of the bridge.

"All hands, use type-A armaments." "All cannons activated, T-minue 1,200 till the first enemy wave reaches our sensor circle." "Minovsky Particles, scattered to battle mode. All mobile suits are ready for launch." In the midst of these voices, "Please come here."

Otto said as he pointed to the Commander's seat. The Commander seat in a battleship signified a higher rank than a ship captain. This was not a position that anyone could simply sit on, and Mineva gave a doubtful look back, but Otto did not falter in his stare as he prompted her to sit.

"You have such a privilege. Here."

There was no pretense in his smile, and after saying that, he turned his tense face back at the main screen. "First wave of enemy scattered." Upon hearing the sensor operator's voice, "They're observing our movements and preventing us from using the hyper-mega particle cannon." Otto answered, showing the expression of a commander who was unable to be bothered with Mineva. In contrast, First Officer Liam approached her, "You can attach the helmet to the side of the seat" and said earnestly. Mineva followed her instruction, and looked at the three dimensional display shown on the screen. The time was GMT 0758 , and the Neo Zeon fleet markers aligned in front of the shoal space region were ostensibly starting to scatter.

"Now's just a matter of showing the information we can get from the optical sensors. We can't catch sight of each other on the radar, and we'll open the cannons 20 minutes later."

Liam said. Mineva nodded to this female officer who seemed composed, and attached her backpack to the seat. She felt the delayed regret over not bringing a drinking straw.

"Please use this microphone. Your voice will be translated into a light signal and sent out. It's very likely our opponents will carry

out optical sensors on our side, so the light signal should be able to reach them. We'll still send the voice and visual over, but do not be too expectant on the effects."

"Then, won't it be difficult for me to prove my identity?"

"That will depends on what you say, Your Highness." Otto interrupted while the bridge crew was in the middle of a lull. "You have your personal vocal charisma, so please pass it on to your countrymen. Just call out to their hearts just like what you said to us."

Mineva felt Otto look at her in the eyes as he said this, and Mihiro and the rest of the bridge crew nodded as they looked back from their seats. "I understand." With an unfaltering expression, she reached her hand for the microphone on the armrest. She clasped onto the microphone that felt exceptionally heavy, irregardless of zero gravity, and looked outside the window at the vast black space.

Calling out to the heart—this was not something she could do as and when she wanted to, and neither was it something she could randomly do so. She once wondered whether she would be betraying her parents' soulds for advising stubborn soldiers to change their minds, the ones who were praying for Zeon's revival, those who saw her as a star of revival. Even if she was denying the Side co-prosperity ring Full Frontal talked about with her emotions, there was nothing that could clearly debunk his theory.

However, the words flowed out naturally. *Trusting each other, calling out to each other,* she felt the thoughts forge themselves in

her heart, and rise up her throat as a heat source. *There's no way back now,* Mineva concluded in her heart. She bet on the possibilities formed by this ship that combined two into one, she believed in the power that supported her from behind, this power that was similar to pressure, and at this point, she just needed to think of moving forward.

She sensed that she was being abnormally calm. *Is it because the owner of the warm hands gave my body strength? Her tongue tip licked her lips that were still felt lubricated by the sensation back then, felt heat pass through her body, and the next moment, she emptied her mind and heart. Her lips approached the microphone, and she said out the first line,*

"Greetings to the Neo Zeon fleet in front of us. I am Mineva Lao Zabi."

Part 6

(Currently, I am making this broadcast from the Earth Federation's Londo Bell ship "Nahel Argama". I am not being detained as a prisoner, and I am not forced to appeal to you. What I want to say next is of my own accord. Please listen to me before we head into battle.)

Audrey was fighting. Banagher felt her voice engulf his heart and nudge it as he flew through the mobile suit deck like an arrow.

The "Unicorn", standing at the partition that was covered in ash , slowly expanded in his sights. The machine had undergone what Takuya described as a Full Armor Plan, and showed its breathtaking force once it appeared in front of him. The

mechanical arms on both sides were equipped with two Beam Gatling guns, and there was a shield on each side. On the back, there was a similar Gatling gun cum shield sets, with two Hyper Bazookas, fastened on the rear sides of the backpack. The bazookas protruding from the shoulders were about to touch the ceiling, and there were additional mounting frames for extra weapons. Besides the three anti-ship missile launchers equipped on both sides, one could see the red heads of the hand grenades lined in a bunch on left and right as well. There were also another 12 grenades, expanded to a mobile suit's size, equipped on both sides of the calves, and reinforced the impression that it was completely covered with weapons. The heavily equipped had completely changed the silhouette of the machine, and transformed it into an ancient warrior, equipped with bunches of blades and spears—as dignified as a Japanese warrior or samurai.

Amongst them, the biggest feature was the large boosters equipped on the back as a mean to offset the increased mass from the added armaments. These booster rockets, taken from the thrusters of the 94 Base Jabber, were bundled together in a pair through the modified Base Jabber's frame attachments, causing the cylinders to extend from the back, its length matching that of an enemy unit's height. Because of this, the unit could not enter the hangar. As it stood in the middle of the deck, the "Unicorn", nicely put, resembled an Archangel with its wings folded, and bluntly put, was a demon with two extravagantly large tails. If one counted the beam rifled wielded in the hand, the Vulcan guns equipped on the head, the physical bullets, mega-cannons, and missiles cannons, there would be a total of 17. While there would be skepticism as to whether it would be appropriate to call it Full

Armor, there was no doubt it had the most firepower for a single mobile suit.

The missile launches were transferred from the "Stark Jegan", and the grenade latches were taken from the stocks of the Jegan-types. *We'll only use whatever we have*, it seemed it was just as Takuya had said. *We actually*…Banagher however swallowed what he wanted to say, and approached Takuya, who was near the cockpit hatch. He was checking the attachments of the additional parts, and the mechanics in Jonas Gibney's group opened the access hatch, checking the machine and the wiring of the optional armaments. Takuya, upon noticing Banagher, wiped the bottom of his nose that was stained in machine oil, "I told you I'll make it in time, right?" He boasted proudly.

"You can fire the optional armaments in your hands and the equipment on your back remotely. There's no blind spot all around! Leave it to me!"

"I don't have that many reticules!"

"It can work. This guy has the Intention Automatic System on board, so it can help you control the reticules to a certain extent. Once you sense an enemy's killing intent, this Lord "Unicorn" will help you aim at it."

Perhaps he was obsessed with some war story. As he watched Takuya say the term 'killing intent' with the expression on his face, Banagher sighed, "Easier said then done…" But while he was in the midst of uttering some bitter words, "This isn't of complete nonsense." Another voice rang, and Banagher looked up in

response. He saw Aaron Terziff, dressed in Anaheim's clothes, reach his hand for the cockpit cover and land at where they were.

"I checked through the data of the Destroy Mode activation, and my suspicions are verified. The light given from the psycoframe is the result of the psycowave overload. Your will, your thoughts caused the psycoframe to glow."

Banagher grabbed onto Aaron's arm as the latter nearly floated by due to excessive force, and pulled him to the hatch, "My will…? " Aaron looked back at a frowning Banagher, "I guess that's correct." and answered with a calm voice.

"A few days ago, I mentioned about the psyco field that stopped "Axis". The same phenomenon as back then happened in this "Unicorn" machine. It isn't just simply the psycommu assisting; the psycoframe even has a conversion mechanism, turning the gathered psycowaves into light, which in turn in converted into physical energy. Of course, this initially has no characteristic; nothing can be used for mechanical control theory. The only fact is that the overload of psycowaves became a force that has tangible properties. Do you understand what this is about ? You are the power source of the "Unicorn". Of course, it does need a generator, and the electricity system is running normally. However, the strange power that appears when it transforms into a "Gundam" comes from you. You can say that your head is its heart, and the "Unicorn" is the body that moves using that as the power source. This is no longer something that can be described as a mobile suit, but an expanded 20m tall 'human'…a giant."

While he did personally experience it, Banagher found this explanation too hard to accept. He could not hide his startled look, was clearly at a loss of what to do, and turned to Takuya. The latter probably heard the same time, and nodded with an approving look, “Well, the important thing is,” he folded his arms, and spoke,

“Maintain your vitality. It’ll become energy and allow the “ Unicorn” to showcase its monsterous power on the battlefield. You ’re not allowed to say that you can’t do anything. Think that you can do it, you will show it to everyone, fight on with your will, and the “Unicorn” will respond to you…that’s how it is, right, Mr Aaron?”

“Unfortunately, I have to agree to this line. In terms of current technology, it’s already a tough thing to carry out tests and set a hypothesis for the phenomenon. It’ll probably take about 10,20 years to anaglyse the data of theis “Unicorn” and compiled it, and that’s if the government will allow people to research on such a dangerous thing.

Aaron answered with a bitter smile as he looked back at the lone horn of the “Unicorn”. *Lingering thoughts*, he repeated what Audrey had once said, and looked at that emotionless face with the facemask. While the thing existing at this place was simply a machine, but if one were to treat it as a ‘human’ 20m tall, a lot of inexplicable things could be explained. Perhaps, just like him, the “ Unicorn” was growing, evolving. Though it was buried in the capabilities called the Newtype-Destroy System, it had the mission to guide a true Newtype to where the “Box” was—this giant had

both light and darkness, contrasting elements. He was trained by the thoughts and lives of everyone related to him, managed to learn how to control these two elements, and unknowingly found the form he should take…

"Even though the system may not be as complete as that of the "Unicorn", the similar situation can be applied to all machines equipped with psycoframes. It is an assumption, but if the " Unicorn" and "Kshatriya" are able to work together successful, there's a possibility that the psyco field can be converted into a weapon."

Aaron said. "Kshatriya?" Banagher suddenly recovered, and asked.

"When different machines let out a resonance, the psycoframe will use the pilot as a medium and expand the reception range. It's the same as "Axis Shock"; when two machines' psycoframes resonance perfectly, they may be able to create a 'field' that can push an asteroid, but I guess it is a dream. You can't call something you can't control a weapon, so just treat this as reference."

To Banagher, who had personally experienced the mysterious light field against the black "Unicorn", the "Banshee", this was truly a refreshing dream. Aaron removed the smile on his face as he looked at the massive body of the "Kshatriya", located at the aft .

"What I'm concerned with, is that the pilot's psycowaves, the source of the phenomenon, will be largely affected by the

psychological state. If Lieutenant Marida's emotions are unstable, she might cause you to be adversely affected."

Aaron's last words were obviously hushed down. "No need to worry about that." But Banagher immediately answered as he avoided Aaron's stare and looked over at the "Kshatriya". The machine had lost its right hand, and its right arm was equipped with two Beam Gatling guns. The 4 long barreled guns looking like a prothestic, giving it a different menacing vibe as compared to before. Banagher ostensibly spotted Marida's pilot suit pass by from its front and enter the cockpit through the hatch in the belly.

Follow your heart. Zinnerman's voice that rang through the wireless communicator in the chaos the previous day had entered Banagher's ears. While that had unraveled the curse binding upon her, what exactly was the thing supporting her to fight? Banagher looked around, unconsciously trying to look for Zinnerman, who definitely could not be around, "I'll be right back", and left these words to Takuya before leaving the scene.

He moved diagonally across the deck, resounding with Audrey' s voice, and grabbed the cockpit hatch of the "Kshatriya". "Miss Marida." Banagher called out, looked up at him, "What is it?" and answered placidly. Banagher however was suddenly at a loss of what to say in response to this question. He looked around the cockpit, where the monitor panels could be changed, and only the insides would be repaired. "Erm, are you alright?" He asked to no avail.

"The Beam Gatling guns were originally developed for the " Kshatriya" use. There is no issues in the synchronization."

"No, I mean your body. Are you hurting right now…?"

This isn't the thing to talk about now.Marida seemed to have realized this faster than the speaker; her hand that was proceeding with the system checks stopped, and she again looked up to him. Banagher could not look at her directly, lowered his head "…Sorry ." He muttered as he grasped at the cockpit hatch for no reason at all.

"I met with the Captain, but we didn't manage to talk properly …"

"I see."

"He must have been worried about you, Miss Marida. He definitely must be finding it difficult to face you now—"

"Banagher."

Banagher felt as if he was poked in the forehead in response to his words. "Don't think of bearing everything by yourself." Marida stared through the display board at Banagher, who lifted his head, and continued on,

"You're not alone. You still have me supporting behind."

"Miss Marida…"

"I do have someone supporting me from behind. I know this even without talking to him."

Her expression was somewhat eased, and she continued with her system checks again. “You do have someone you want to support, don’t you? Just think of her.” Her answer overlapped with Audrey’s voice that was aired through the wireless, causing Banagher to feel new warmth burning in him. He, Marida, and Audrey were no longer weeds without roots; they were all in a ring of mutual support, bonds. Banagher understood that there were certain things stronger than bloodlines, birth; fetters that could support his footing, and chuckled, answering, “Got it.” He wanted to leave the cockpit as such, but another thought caused him to grab the entrance again.

“Miss Marida, what do you like to eat?”

“Why this out of a sudden?”

She lifted her face nonchalantly and blinked her eyes. “There’s something at least, right?” Banagher asked again, and Marida showed a serious pondering look. “Ice cream…I guess.” This was the first time he heard such a halting tone from her. “There’s a shop that sells nice ones on “Industrial 7”. Banagher then poked his head forward and said this.

“We’ll get out of this situation. We’ll all go there afterwards.”

“Ahh…”

“It’s a promise. I’ll definitely lead you there.”

The troubled expression broke into a smile, “I understand. I’ll be looking forward to it.” Marida answered. *We do have this tomorrow, this future; even if there isn’t one, I want to personally build it* . Banagher decided in his heart. “I’ll see you later then.” He said, and kicked himself away from the cockpit hatch. *We still have a lot of things to do*. He muttered in his heart, and returned to the fully armed “Unicorn”. The white giant was engulfed by Audrey’s voice , echoing through the deck, and was ostensibly waiting for its owner to return.

(It isn’t about which side is the correct one. We are incomplete if we take one side. I know the Spacenoids and Earthnoids are existences that are like two sides of a mirror…)

Part 7

"But even if one side conquers the other, it will not solve the problem. The idea to build high walls and ignore each other is also incorrect. Please do not be afraid of change; after the trials we had since the One Year War, perhaps we have finally found a chance to progress. If you believe in a kind future for humanity, in both Space and Earth, I hope you can let us pass through. As dignified warriors of Zeon, I hope you display the courage to follow your heart."

Mineva spoke till this point, switched off the wireless communicator, and reached a hand to her throat, indicating that she was thirsty. Otto handed her the drinking tube as he looked over at the main screen. There was no movement in the Neo Zeon fleet markers; they were divided in 5 groups of 3 ships, lined in a formation of 3 rows, waiting along the "Nahel Argama" projected path.

"How is it?"

"No response. The Minovsky Particle density is increasing."

The Sensor Operator answered, and it was a reality—that words alone could not change, and could not save. There were some things that could not be understood without fighting for with all their might. Otto sighed and looked at Liam; once they managed to establish understanding through this, he looked at Mineva, only to find her already looking back at him. *You sure?* There was no need to ask verbally, as her eyes told him that it was alright. Otto nodded back, "Prepare for anti-air combat!" And hollered, signifying the start to this battle.

"Mobile suit squadron, proceed forward. The formation will be as notified before. All cannons, begin firing once we enter range."

The recitations and commands echoed at once, and the alarm rang, indicating that they were to prepare for battle. There was still 10 minutes until they made contact, and it was about time for any lucky long-ranged missiles to hit them. Otto stared at the markers on the screen, and grabbed the wireless on the armrest. "This is the Captain to the RX-0. Banagher, do you hear me?" Upon hearing Otto's voice, Mineva, who just put on her helmet, glanced over.

(Yes, I hear you.)

"The enemy wants to get rid of us before we enter the Shoal Space region. Don't mind about the rear, and just focus on moving forward. We'll move forward towards the "Unicorn"."

(Understood.)

"I know I really shouldn't say such things when I'm asking an ordinary civilian to be the vanguard, but don't force yourself. You must return alive. It's meaningless if we simply reach the "Box"."

After a slight pause, (Understood), a voice returned, and it sounded as if the pilot had been through many battlefields. We can only move forward and pray that he can lead a path for us foolish Oldtypes. He felt bitterness in his mouth, and said, "Good luck."

Part 8

(The “Kshatriya” will leave the ship after the RX-0. All units, proceed to the designated Catapult Decks)

(Lieutenant Marida Cruz, Romeo 010 and Juliet 006 will proceed with defense. Lieutenant, please backup the RX-0.)

(Roger that.)

(The Garencieres Team “Geara Zulus”, Golf 001 and 002 are to stay back and protect immediate cover. Shoot down any enemies within a 10km radius.)

(Roger that. They’re our enemies, no need to show any glamor this time.)

(To all the bastards on the gun turrets! Our enemies are rebels unwilling to listen to the Princess. Don’t hold back and show those Federation princes how the Garencieres team fights!)

In the midst of the orderly departure announcements, there was a holler that was not very elegant, to say the least. Marida, Flaste, and the subordinates had already known which forts they were to man in this ship; the voices echoed, and Zinnerman slowly lifted his head. During this time, the voices still echoed through the ship’s broadcast, slowly stirring the heavy atmosphere in the detention room.

(All hands, our immediate priority is to reach the Shoal Space Region. Once we can enter the space wreckage, there is a chance for us to shake off our pursuers. The enemy will probably have difficult organizing a coordinated action.)

It's the opposite, isn't it? Zinnerman instinctively decided as his body shuddered, and looked over at the loudspeaker as Otto's voice boomed.

Captain Tennyson Baguette, commander of the Tennyson fleet, had once taken part in the conflict that caused the Shoal Space Region, the Battle of Loum. That man would make trips down to the Shoal Space Region for inspection when staying at Palau, and create space charts for his own use; if it were him, he would use the Shoal Space Region as a weapon. Once he determined that the enemy would be hard to deal with, he would lure them into the Region and deal them the fatal blow.

Did that Flaste forget? He was at the Captain's Meeting! Zinnerman cussed out in his mind as he listened in on the wireless voice. He did not hear any suspicious tone at all, as Alec, Tomura and the rest of the crew could be heard along with the "Nahel Argama" crew. *What a bunch of fools! Why am I feeling so anxious?* He looked around the room that was covered with mats, and then looked over at the metal door. There was a communication panel on the passage; he thought he had to contact the bridge, and just when he was about to take a step forward, he was surprised that he actually stood up without knowing.

This was a predicament he did not anticipate a few seconds ago. His body, which should have become a hollow, actually moved on its own. He merely felt exasperated by how useless his subordinates were, wanted to lash out at them, and ended up feeling zealous. *What exactly is going on here?* He looked surprised, confused, shaken as he stood blankly, and again turned his stare to the light shining in from the outside. The faint light shining into the detention room could not reach inside, but if he took just a single step, he could reach out for it.

But you managed to get something in return, right?

The phantom standing at the door, the rigid voice echoed clearly in his mind. *That bastard really left it opened and left me alone,* "Seriously…" he let out a hoarse voice, and stared at the white light shining on the corridor. He felt the luminosity seemed to have increased as compared to before, and the light from the fluorescent panels that could be seen everywhere became as dazzling as ever.

Part 9

Banagher cautiously stepped on the pedal, and before he could take a step forward completely, he felt a resistance pressing on the unit from the back. He summoned the balancer settings on the display board, for the booster rockets equipped on the backpack seemed to have exerted more torque than he had expected. He chose the automatic adjustment function that would react with the psycommu, and as he was calibrating the values (Hey Micott!?) Takuya's voice rang through the wireless.

He inadvertently lifted his head, looked around, and spotted the normal suit ignoring the frantic outstretched arms of Takuya and Aaron as she leapt from the floor and to the forefront of the " Unicorn"; Haro, nestled in her arms, brought some color on the all-view monitor. He then closed his helmet visor, and opened the cockpit hatch. The air inside flowered out to the mobile suit deck that was in a vacuum; the sound of wind gushing away became distant, and the normal suit that leapt in blocked his sights.

She passed through the hatch, and the momentum carried her past the display board, causing them to end up in each other's arms through a collision-like manner. (Are you okay, Banagher?) Banagher watched Haro slip out from her hands and jump about in the cockpit as it flapped about, and then put his hand on the normal suit Micott was definitely in. Micott Bartsch had her head buried in his chest, and did not have any intention to raise it. Their helmets touched each other, letting out a thud, and he heard a sobbing, frantic breath.

"Don't force yourself just because you're hailed as a Newtype."

This voice was mixed in amongst his breath, and after leaning on each other for just a moment, she quickly lifted her head, "Right , I'm satisfied now. Go on now." and showed a smile through the visor. *I really couldn't do anything for this girl…*he looked back at her moist glittering eyes as he experienced this bitterness, and smiled as he answered, "I'm going now. I'll leave Haro with you." He did not believe that he could give a nice smile, "I'll be waiting with everyone." But Micott answered as such, and carried Haro as she floated through the hatch.

(You're too slow, Newtype!)

Soon after he watched Micott leave, the latter not looking back, there was a holler ringing in the helmet, shooing away all unhappiness. It was Lieutenant Pool in Romeo 010. Banagher, upon seeing the "ReZEL" take a step forward from the hangar, " Understood!" yelled back, closed the hatch, and let the "Unicorn" move forward. He turned around, taking note of the boosters on his back, and just when he was about to advance to the elevator leading to the catapult deck (Don't take all the enemies yourself!) the Lieutenant continued.

(Don't over-commit to them. Leave the remaining machines that had passed by to us. Don't think too much about them.)

(It's finally our show now. I can't sleep well if we have to use a kid as our shield.)

Ensign Mako in Juliet 006 interjected at the same time. He was one of the backup pilots of the "Nahel Argama", but he did come up with the plan to reassemble the spare parts back into a machine , a "Stark Jegan" that could be deployed in cases of emergency, so he was no ordinary personnel. He recalled their bold expressions, "Understood. Please take care of me." and answered back. Once the elevator had risen, he stepped on the pedal. (Master Banagher.) a respectful voice different from before immediately rang, causing him to be a tad slower in getting on the catapult deck.

(Once the path to "Industrial 7" is opened, we'll force our way into "Magallanica". Please do not force yourself.)

It was Gael. He, who was familiar with the construct of the " Magallanica", was in charge of leading Conroy and the ECOAS members. (Got it. I hope you'll be fine too, Mr Gael.) Banagher answered.

(If the "Box" is really on the "Magallanica", I guess I know where it is. Even if Frontal takes the initiative, there's a chance to snatch it back. Please take care of yourself.)

(Our "Lotos" will be acting as moving cannons on the ship until we reach our destination. We'll meet again on the "Magallanica" again. Squad Leader Daguza managed to preserve your life. Don't ruin it.)

Conroy then followed up. (Path's clear. RX-0, please launch.) At the same time, Mihiro's voice could be heard, "Understood!" and Banagher answered them as he latched the "Unicorn" onto the catapult. Through the opened gate, he saw the catapult deck extended to the bow, moved his sights higher, and saw the space that disappeared into vast eternal darkness.

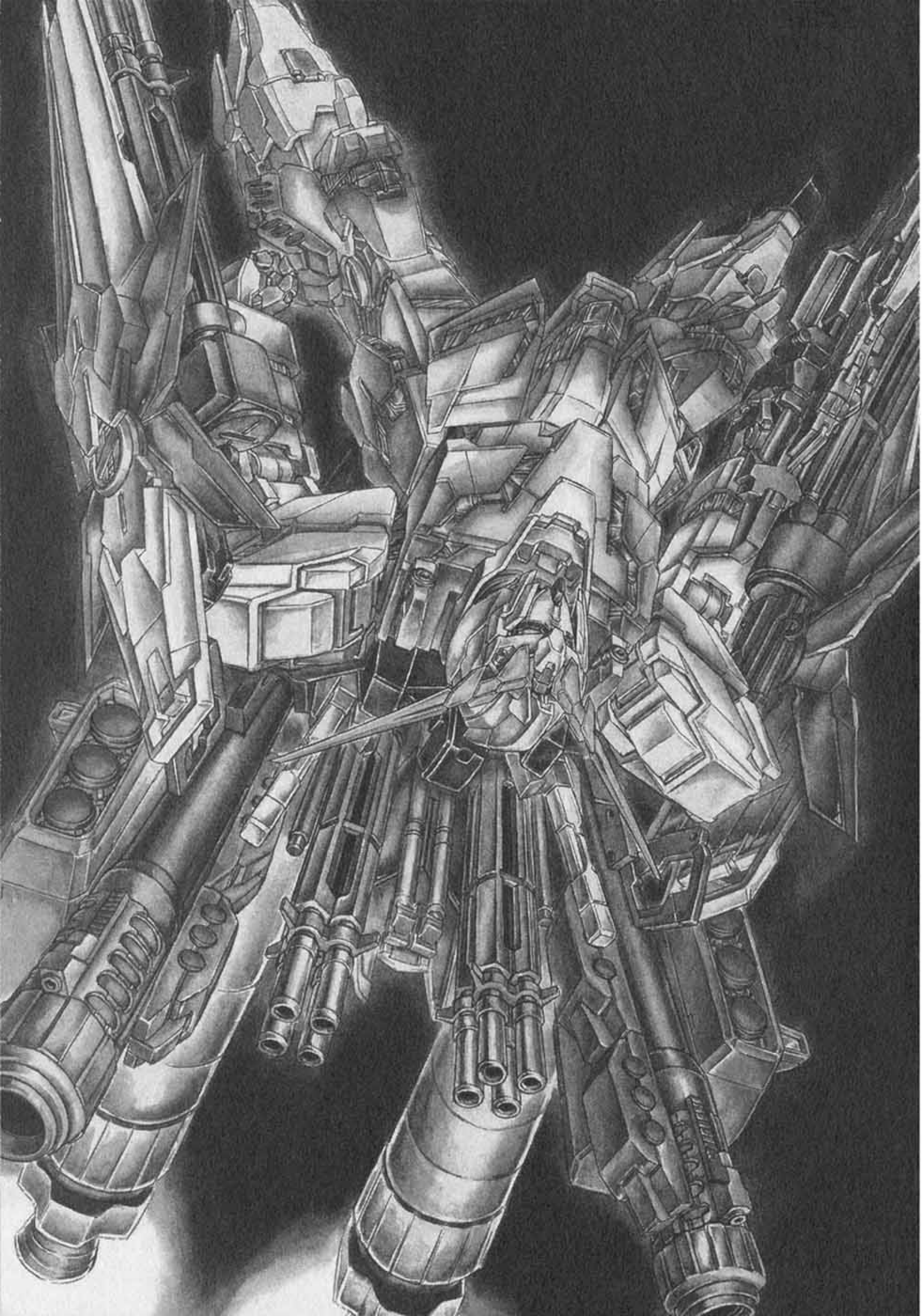
There was the icy vacuum and the warmth of many supporting him from behind. His body inadvertently shuddered as it stood on the divide, and he recalled the desires he discussed with Audrey, but at this point, it was a luxury. She, who continued to advise the Neo Zeon fleet to retreat, had advanced into the battlefield earlier than he did. As long as they could survive, they could only to talk for as long as he could. They could definitely affirm the warmth of each other, just as they did a while back.

I won't die. I'll definitely come back. Banagher exerted strength in his abdomen, and stared into the space in front of him.

"Banagher Links, "Unicorn Gundam", launching!"

The catapult, powered by a linear thrust, started to glide, and the booster rockets on the back lit at the same time, causing a tremor more intense than usual to rock the cockpit. The "Unicorn" exerted the full power of its booster rockets the moment it was launched, dragging a long thruster flare as lit flew into the vacuum . The light became a large membrane that appeared behind the machine, and the lone-horned beast that had gained wings immediately left the mothership.

They had to break through the wall Full Frontal had constructed, and advance to the slumbering land of the "Laplace Box". The preceding thoughts exploded in a thin flash of light on his forehead, causing Banagher to sense that he was resonating with the psycommu. The psycoframe was activated, the armor plates on each other slid apart, and the machine experienced an uneven torque as it accelerated and rolled to the side. Once it finished, the lone horn on the forehead broke into a V-sign, the dual-eye sensors flashed as it showed itself from the facemask, and the machine that had obtained the appearance of a "Gundam" caused the psycoframe to glow all over its body.



"This can work…!"

The machine moved according to the strength released by his body and mind; the giant become one with him, a human—Banagher raced on with the target being the space where the enemy fleet set camp. The thruster flares resonated with the red fluorescent light, and the accelerating "Unicorn Gundam" glided in space like a comet.

Part 10

The unit had many cannons protruding from its back, and distanced itself rapidly as it was pushed by the large thruster flare. This scene awakened the memory that was implanted in her before she was born, the words that had become familiar with her; Marida let out a voice that was ostensibly a sigh,

""Gundam"…"

This word unconditionally awakened the hostility within her, and her sisters, who were nurtured in the icy capsules, had viewed this as an enemy they had to defeat—however, she could no longer feel anything at this point. The only understanding she had of it was that it carried the familiar soul of Banagher, a vessel with his own thoughts, nothing more, nothing less. Marida found it intriguing, and let the "Kshatriya" move forward from the elevator that had arrived at the top. The moss-green machine closed the binders on its shoulders, trying to get through to the catapult exit. Its massive body, which had excessive specifications, stood on the catapult dangling in vacuum.

Perhaps it's the 'light' I've been pursuing. The machine's large size meant that it was unable to enter the catapult, and as she waited in the machine for the permit to launch, Marida started to dwelve into her thoughts. *The light was born in the artificially-made body, the light had been robbed from the belly; this light has been changing its form all the time, for it has to shine into the unknown tomorrow and future. No matter how much I try to pursue it, I can't catch up to it no matter how I pursue after it. I understood it for a long time, and because I understood, I looked away, and stopped in the darkness together with those who had lost their light. I keep looking for a flicker of light in others, but I never thought that I can be the light for others.*

It's different now. I can be the 'light'. I have a life supporting this body of mine that has nowhere to go, the person who gave me the unique name Marida Cruz, the one who pointed me to the only thing I can follow.

"Follow my heart…is it…?"

She muttered as she put her hands on the ball-shaped control sticks. Had that man, who always hated to be called 'master', yet to find where his 'light' is? As she thought about this and looked behind, (We have a large number of incoming heat sources!) A tense voice rang through the wireless, causing Marida and the machine to look down in unison.

(20, 30…we've many of them approaching fast!)

(Evasive maneuver! Release the dummy meteorites! Don't hit the launching mobile suits!)

Captain Otto's voice rang, and the hull of the "Nahel Argama" experienced inertial gravity. Marida felt the hull move vastly to the right, and gathered her thoughts at the approaching killing intent, which had become a wall in front of her. The ones approach in an overly straight line however were not mobile suits, but long ranged missiles or something similar. Once she affirmed this, her body reacted faster than her thoughts, (Launch process aborted.) and she took initiative, saying,

"Marida Cruz, "Kshatriya", launching!"

The main thrusters hidden in the 4 binders let out thruster flares , and the "Kshatriya" left the catapult deck as it rose in a straight trajectory. It was impossible to have 100% output, but the balance was not too bad, and the damaged parts had lightened the machine, so she could offset the imbalance if she could control it well. As she flew in the G-force pressing down from above, Marida finished her affirmations within 3 seconds, and immediately turned the machine, which had risen by several kilometers, forward. The 4 binders flapped, and once the "Kshatriya" raised the twin barreled Beam Gatling guns on the right arm forward, it turned into a block of thruster flare as it advanced briskly.

There were 32 incoming missiles, and though they were suppressing shots fired with the help of the optical sensors, but several of them were on course to the "Nahel Argama" path. The " Unicorn Gundam" preceding her seemed to have sensed the same killing intent, "Leave them, Banagher!" and Marida, who had realized this, shouted out as she accelerated the "Kshatriya".

"I'll handle this! Move forward!"

The mobile suit squadron swarming from behind the missiles was pressuring her field of senses, and it seemed Tennyson's fleet intended to crush them with its full strength. (Got it! I'll leave it to you!) Once she actually heard Banagher's voice, she gathered her consciousness on her field of senses that was synchronizing with the psycommu. 5, 6…she caught the vibration of the missiles flying in a straight line, read their paths, and released her sudden will to fight in the form of a voice.

"Funnels, go!"

The wing-like binders expanded throughout, and the several funnels hidden within flew out. The mini automatic cannons were controlled by the psycommu as they glided out in a zig-zag, and Marida's consciousness followed them into the void. The incoming missiles loomed, and she could clearly sense the structures of the warheads that had abandoned their propulsion rockets. In an instant, which felt like an eternity, the funnels that were synchronized with the consciousness fired mega particle cannons, and the scorching light exploded within her senses.

This scene immediately became reality as it appeared in Marida' s eyes, agitating her senses. There were more than 10 exploded fireballs expanding in the "Nahel Argama" way, gradually covering the silhouette of the "Unicorn Gundam" that was moving away. The lights signifying the beginning of the battle exploded between the two armies, lighting the long road to "Industrial 7" like a torch.

Part 11

The idling sound of the nuclear rocket engine echoed in the ship , and unlike a jet engine, it felt as boring as that of an air-conditioner. Unlike the Dodai Kai that was to be used only in gravity, the Base Jabbers used in space did not have much room.

Alberto grabbed onto the seat's back that was surrounded by consoles, moved his body towards the co-pilot seat, and turned his body with much difficulty in an attempt not to touch the cluster of buttons. After much effort, he finally managed to put his rear into the cramped seat, and just when the backpack of his normal suit was to be fastened to the attachments, (Mr Alberto, will you kindly reconsider?) Captain Maseki's voice rang through the wireless.

(Our fleet has no order to necessarily interfere with this battle. If anything happens to you, the responsibility will fall upon me.)

The hired Captain only focused on his own issues, and did not say anything else. He followed the instructions given by the Vist Foundation, being mindful of the attitudes of the Senate Council members backing Alberto, and notably, that of the Empress of the Moon that had tamed them all. *I'm still in aunt's hands now.* Once he again realized that he had never escaped from her clutches, Alberto turned his sights to the pilot seat at his left. He nodded at the pilot, who was looking back uneasily, and prompted the latter to launch, "I should have explained before." He said into the wireless communicator shamelessly,

"I have no intentions of joining the battle. I just want to use the resonance function of the psycoframe to support the "Banshee"."

He operated the display monitor on the console and summoned the visual of the wide platform onto the back of the pilot seat. There were 8 large containers carrying spare parts of the “Banshee ” at the section originally used for ferrying mobile suits, 4 on top, 4 at the bottom, fastened with cable. Leaving aside the fact that he could have provided support by equipping armaments, it was normal for Maseki and the pilot to find it strange that Alberto was claiming to support by ferrying spare parts over. The “Axis Shock” had proven that unknown characteristics of the psycommu, and these ordinary soldiers definitely would not understand. Even Alberto, who had personally witnessed the creation of the field, did not dare to say how well acquainted he was.

“The spare parts on this Base Jabber have psycoframe on them, enough to build a Unicorn-unit. The more it can resonate, the more beneficial it will be for the “Banshee”.”

(The Moon observatory has caught sight of battle lights. They have begun. You’ll be entering the battlefield.)

“Just what I want. The more agitated the battlefield is, the easier it is to capture the “Banshee” psycowaves. We’ll be pulled together once I approach.”

The psycofield would expand vastly due to resonance, and if he entered the battlefield that would be filled with it, he might be able to pick up the psycowaves of Ple Twelve—Marida Cruz. While there was no evidence, Alberto had no other deduction to rely on, and got ready for the launch impact. The generator soon got

louder, (But the psycoframe has no psycommu function, it's just an ordinary metal…!) and reverberated together with Maseki's growl.

"That should have been the case, but the data shows something more. There's still value in trying this out.)

Alberto did not have confidence that he could only to say such baseless words unabashedly as he cut off the communication on his side, and looked over at the black space on the other side of the opened gate. There was more than 50,000km from this point to the battlefield, the "General Revil" was moving at maximum battle speed, and the Base Jabber, using the catapult force and the booster rockets equipped on both sides, would probably reach the battlefield an hour and a half later than the "Banshee". The chances of the "Banshee" and "Unicorn" meeting immediately was nearly zero in this space filled with Minovsky particles, amidst the Shoal Space region filled with the debris of many colonies. If successful, he would be able to reach the "Banshee" before the two machines meet.

It was useless to think about what would happen later on, but the one thing he was certain was that he would be unable to interfere if he did not do this. He would lose the chance to get back Marida Cruz forward, and could only watch the unshakeable fact as the 'final gambit' activates. As long as there was a reason for him to accept the happenings around him, it was enough; simply put, he wanted to reason to take the first step forward. Once he affirmed this in his heart, he stared at the icy darkness, the darkness that appeared in front of his eyes once he escaped from his aunt's clutches. Amidst it, there was darkness in the sapphire blue eyes, ostensibly leading into the deep sea—

"I won't let you be taken by anyone. I must personally…"

As he unwittingly muttered, "We're launching. There'll be a massive G-force pressing on us. Please be prepared." the pilot spoke up, and Alberto again pressed his helmet onto the headrest. The catapult deck leading to the bow lights its guiding lights, and the countdown at the gate pointed to zero. The nuclear engine buzzed till its climax, and the Base Jabber started to move forward.

The Sub-Flight System had two containers on its flat frame, and left the "General Revil" through its own thrust. It then lowered its relative velocity, flying safely as if it were a civilian space shuttle. Once its displacement from the "General Revil" was 3km, the Base Jabber's assist boosters lit up, and it proceeded with the first acceleration. The G-force bordering on danger pressed upon Alberto's body, and he was crushed onto the co-pilot before he could groan.

The rubbing vibration echoed within the cockpit, and the blood in the entire body gathered at the back. The hands grabbing at the armrests were unable to move, the saliva flowing out from the side of his lips, climbing onto his trembling cheeks. His darkened vision narrowed hastily, and just as he felt he was about to lose consciousness, he continued to stare at the Moon glowing in front of him.

He was headed to a distant place neither his departed father's soul nor Martha's demonic clutches could reach. Without knowing whether he was falling or rising, he raced through the space of eternal night, being alone for the first time.

Part 12

The Musaka-class cruisers, when viewed from above, had the shape of an acute isosceles triangle, giving the impression that it was a miniature version of the Rewloola –class. Its unique trait was the two heat sink panels installed at the aft, expanding to both port and starboard like the wings. This structure was not just simply to increase the effectiveness of cooling the nuclear engines, but also to increase the mobility.

The Earth Federation force they were facing had a much smaller fighting strength, and there was no need for large ship cannon bombardments, even if it were to be a signal. Their main priority was to maintain a mobile fleet that could allow for quickstrike attacks while sustaining enough operating mobile suit squardrons on their side—This was the fleet building philosophy established in the Second Neo Zeon War, and had continued as a tradiation amongst the so-called “Sleeves”. There was no other battleship in this Neo Zeon fleet other than the flagship, the “Rewloola”. If one included the newly built ships that had entered space within the past three years, the main force, the Tennyson fleet, was composed only of Musaka-classes and some disguised ships with mobile suits on board, forming a mobile fleet array comprising a total of 15 ships. While a large fleet could not quickly respond, this definition was not suited for the Tennyson fleet. Under the command of the fleet commander Captain Tennyson, all the ship captains had undergone strict training in the shoal space region, were well-versed in maneuvering the massive ships like fighter jets, and were used to coordinate more than a hundred fomrations. This is the effect of the unique operation directive Tennyson

exercised, by dividing the fleet into 5 squadrons, and deleglating each commander with a suitable amount of autonomy.

With Tennyson's own squadron as the center, the fleet, divided into groups of 3 ships, scattered apart separately, hoping to form a 2-3 defensive wall against the enemy intending to break through the middle. It had been 30 minutes since the battle began, and though they had to change formations due to being suppressed by the unexpectedly stubborn enemy, Tennyson had confidence that they could settle this before the Shoal Space Region.

Even if the frontline was broken through, the vanguard forces were well-versed in turning back and uniting with the rear group to surround the enemy. At the very least, they would not have to involve the Gajumal fleet harboring Full Frontal's personal escorts. If they were successful, he felt it was not impossible to sink the " Nahel Argama" before Frontal was done with resupply, and move the entire fleet to "Industrial 7".

However—

"Bridges' fleet was broken through…?"

It had been 5 minutes since the order was given to change formations. The squadron tasked as the vanguard had sent out a distress signal, causing Tennyson to inadvertently get up from the commander's seat. At a corner of the flagship "Garom" ordinary bridge, the Operator facing the sensors turned around with a pale look, "That's right." And said.

"Details are unknown due to the space wreckage, but every ship is repeatedly reporting 'Unable to steer'."

"We haven't entered the Shoal Space Region! How can there be a space with so much debris that laser communication is jammed —?"

He roared, but was suddenly unable to do anything. They were however not of the shoal space, but countless debris floating in the battlefield—the wreckage of mobile suits destroyed in battle. According to the Intel Frontal provided, the "Mock Trojan Horse" only had a few mobile suits on board. Considering the fact that the enemy was still attacking, it was hard to imagine these debris, jamming the communicators, to be from the enemy units.

"Our units got sunk…?"

The captain of the "Goram", seated at the Captain's seat beside Tennyson, "Are we going to activate the battle bridge?" asked as he looked back with an observant look. Tennyson would never hide inside the battle bridge even during battle, as a show of confidence that he could survive no matter what battle he was in. He glanced over at the captain, who deliberately asked this despite knowing, and kept the answer to himself as he leaned his body to the window at the front of the bridge. Reflected off the window was the uniformed attire sans the normal suit, as part of the tradition in the Principality army's era, and he stuck his face on the thick, transparent plastic board.

"Set a formation with the two backup squads in the Shoal Space Region. Send a mobile suit squadron to search for survivors."

He ignored the recitations as he stared at the distant battlefield. The fires in vacuum were exceptionally cold, and from across the " Geara Zulus" units providing direct cover to the "Garom", he could see numerous lights of explosions appear and disappear, flickering throughout, with crossing beams etching out burning trails in his sight. There was no refraction of light, and the lights looked exceptionally bright, the distance being probably 1,000km away…or closer. Either way, the light rings of explosions expanded as time passed, proving that the target breaking through the frontlines was headed for them.

"There's someone being an obstacle there…is it that mobile suit called the "Unicorn"?"

It was just a small enemy, but it oppressed them with the obstacle called willpower, and this feeling—Tennyson had experienced this feeling before, at the battle of the space fortress " A Baoa Qu", and that was the first time he felt uneasy standing at the windowside without any defense. *Impossible*, he muttered in his heart, and suppressed the impulse to leave the window. *The vanguard is broken through because there's an enemy's broadcast of someone impersonating Mineva Zabi, causing the soldiers to be skeptical and confused when attacking. A mere mobile suit can't possibly cause this much pressure to the Tennyson fleet.* He clenched his hands that were resting on the window, "Carry out all anti-air surveillance seriously!" he barked to cast aside his inner timidity.

"The enemy's just a damaged ship. No matter how powerful the mobile suit is, it's impossible to bre—"

A flash then occurred outside in an instant, and the intense flash filled the entire bridge as the anti-glare filter could not negate it completely. The shockwave expanded from up close, rocking the ship, and the scattered debris pattered around as it hit on the outer walls of the ship. Tennyson immediately covered his eyes, and through the gap between his fingers, he saw a scorching flame and the arm of a "Geara Zulu" being ripped apart. Before he could realize that the covering mo ile suit was shot down, "Incoming heat source, fast approaching!" The Communiator Operator's voice sounded like a shriek as the incoming alarm rang throughout the bridge.

"Too slow! What's the mobile suit squads doing!?"

He hollered without any restrain, and again looked outside the window. The enemy passed through the allied machines that should have been there, shooting down the cover units from outside the sensor range— *where is it* ? He looked towards the explosion lights that were approaching, and his expression reflected off the window turned pale due to fear. In a corner of his eye, there was a red light different from the lights of explosion.

A phosphorus red light, different from an explosion or a thruster flare, darted through space like a mirage and approached them. "It's too fast…!" The Operator groaned, "It's coming!" another voice overpowered it, and an unprecedentedly powerful shockwave rocked the "Goram" bridge.

It felt as if they were crushed in a large beast's jaw, and then shaken away with brute force. Tennyson was sent flying away, and he crashed into the ceiling before he could protect himself. The lights in the bridge had turned red, flickering about, and the Steering Operator was tossed away from his seat, bouncing through the bridge like a ball. Tennyson wanted to ask for a damage report, but was unable to breathe, and as he, in his confusion, grabbed onto the helm , the red glowing light passed through the port of the ship, and entered his eyes.

"A "Gundam"…?"

Shrouded in the red phosphorous light, the white color of the armor and the unique silhouette of the machine was unmistakeable. It instantly vanished, and a newly created explosion shook the bridge. "A direct hi to the engine room! It's a direct hit!" The Communication Operator's voice rang in Tennyson 's ears.

(There's a large breach in the thruster nozzle! It looks like it was chewed through! What is that thing!?)

(The "Charne" at the back seemed to have gotten hit too! It's breaking off course!)

(It's closing in! We're about to crash!)

"Evade! Turn using the sub thrusters! Mobile suit squadrons are to give pursuit!"

The Captain grabbed onto the Captain's seat, and upon hearing the reports coming in fromt everywhere, hollered out. However, his instructions were refuted by the Communications Operator, " The heat sink panels are destroyed! We can't increase the engine's output!" The Captain's face appeared in the flickering red lights, and he was at a loss of what to say.

"The covering mobile suit squadrons have all been destroyed. Recall the single ship at the front back to defend."

"The "Charne" sent a signal. It can't move."

The Operator's voice sounded like a final blow. There was once a Federation unit that passed through the intercrossing fires of "A Baoa Qu", opening a large hole in the Zeon's defense fleet; the machine in front of his eyes had inherited that machine's design. " The White Devil…?" Tennyson groaned as he leaned his body, floating weakly in zero gravity, onto the window. "Incoming enemy units from behind!" The Operator's shout rang, and the Captain did not look back at Tennyson as he gave the order, "All hands, put on your normal suits!" Immediately afterwards, a collision impact passed through from the aft to the stern, and the unexpected term of 'defeat' was etched in Tennyson's body and mind.

The "Goram" nozzles at the aft were burning, wrecked, and the "Charne" that crashed into them. The two ships crashed together dully, like they were being docked, probably because it was because their relative velocities were almost identical. The " Unicorn Gundam" turned its back on them, and attacked the

remaining Musaka-class ship forming the core team. The white machine zig-zagged with the help of its booster rockets, did not give the enemy the time to fire a perimeter of anti-air shots, and got to the belly of the Musaka-class. Banagher's muscles twitched as he felt the G-force pressing on him everywhere, caught sight of the killing intent in front of him, and stared at the CG-corrected visual on the all-view monitor.

Two "GAZA-D" squadrons fired their large beam cannons, dubbed the Knuckle Busters, and transformed into mobile armor form before approaching. The hooks, which were the legs in mobile suit form, reached out like a raptor, and just before two units, resembling that of a bug, could scatter, Banagher fired the Hyper Bazookas on the shoulders. The physical shots were fired in anticipation of each unit's trajectory, and the scattered metal balls, amounting in hundreds, rained down on where the "Gaza Ds" were. The two units were struck by the balls, crashing in at 10 times the sound of sound, and spun out of control. Once that happened however, Banagher saw a "Geara Zulu" squadron fly over to fill the opening the previous two machines left behind.

"Back down!"

The Beam Gatling guns in his arms quickly spun around, and let out 4 trails of rapid-fire beams. Banagher ceased the opportunity shown when the 3 "Geara Dogas" showed fear, and immediately closed in on the Musaka-class ship. The moss-green ship evaded upon seeing the abnormality of the ships in front, but once they passed each other, Banagher threw the remaining half of

his grenades out. These mobile-suit grenades did not activate immediately, but floated around the Musaka-class, and once they grazed the directional nozzles on the side, they exploded.

The heat from the thrusters, which were activated in an attempt to change directions, ignited the grenades. The thrusters were knocked aside by the explosion, and the other thrusters, which were lit to stabilize the hull, triggered another set of grenades, causing the stabilizing nozzles on both sides to be engulfed in the lights of the explosion. The beam Magnum fired then grazed through the aft, and the heat and scattered particles melted the nozzles of the main thrusters. The Musaka-class became a large metal scrap that could not move, despite its turbines and weapons being unaffected.

Once the main thrusters were destroyed, the spaceships would share the fate of a rudderless naval ship. Banagher glanced down at the floating ship, affirmed there was no need to sink it, and left the Musaka-class, passing through the shots from the covering units.

2 “Geara Dogas” were pursuing, firing their beam machine guns, and there were beams raining from top and bottom. Some missiles then came a tad little, activating the approach sensors, and the lights of explosions engulfed the “Unicorn Gundam”. Banagher was shaken by the club-like impacts slamming upon him as he continued to look around, and caught sight of new enemies closing in from top and bottom. The “Geara Zulus” disembarked from the flat SFS, and fired its beam machine gun as it approached from below. A black machine resembling a SFS turned its bow towards its back, and once its wing-like thruster unit was folded

up, it transformed into a mobile suit wielding a large beam rifle; the expanded window showed a matching data, indicating it was the AMX-008 “Ga-Zowmnn”.

Above him was another group of “Geara Zulu”, replacing the “ Ga Zowmnn”, approaching fast. There were 7 machines pursuing from 3 directions, including the 3 “Geara Dogas” chasing from behind. Banagher, whose senses were synchronized with the psycommu, felt their ‘presences’, and made an emergency brake by flaring the stabilizing burners on its body, negating the momentum brought forth by the booster rockets, and decelerated while seemingly moving backwards. The “Unicorn Gundam” changed into the middle of the perimeter formed by the 7 enemy units, and fired all the weapons it was equipped with, causing a rain of beams and physical bullets to scatter around like a storm.

The six Beam Gatling guns on its arms and back spun and fired at the same time, the two Hyper Bazookas pointed upwards fired their 380mm cannons, and the anti-ship missiles littered on the bazookas were shot out afterwards. The missiles carried trails of gas and hit the “Ga Zowmnn” directly, and once he felt felt the machine above get knocked aside above, Banagher squeezed onto the trigger, trying to scatter away any incoming pressure. The “ Unicorn Gundam” raised its arms, let loose trails of Beam Gatling guns, and spun around, punching holes in the abdomens of the “ Geara Dogas” and ripping their limbs off. The “Ga Zowmnn” took direct hits from the mega particles, and exploded; as the explosion light expanded around, the machines that were fired upon were engulfed by the white hot lights, and the psycoframe let out bewitching lights as it sensed the ‘presences’ released by the enemies.

"That's 19 of them…!"

He let out these words with bated breath, and again stepped on the pedal. The "Unicorn Gundam" swpt aside the lingering ' presences' that disappeared amidst the explosions, and once it moved forward again, a pressure struck Banagher from behind. He instinctively felt danger, and as the intention automatic system reacted, a mega particle cannon, completely different from a mobile suit portable weapon, grazed past, the shockwave hitting the machine as it rolled to the side. The Musaka-class was unable to move, but as it still had its weapons, it continued to bombard. Banagher endured the G-force bearing on his body as he dodged the incoming shots side to side, wanting to let the machine move forward as he glided in space.

This was not a bad decision. The Musaka-class intended to shoot down the "Gundam", which was flying away, as it fired the cannons attached to it. However, the third cannon at the aft was shot down at the base before it could reload. A beam came from a completely different direction, shooting the turret down along with the capacitor at the base. The Musaka-class veered further off course, shaken by the explosions right at the back of the bridge construct. There were many small objects above it, so small even the motion sensors could not pick up, and these things flew back to their main machine far away—the "Kshatriya".

"I won't let anyone shoot the "Gundam" down."

The dozen funnels or so hid within the binders to recharge, and Marida's "Kshatriya" followed the "Unicorn Gundam". Even after

breaking through the core squadron, the two squadrons at the back remained unscathed, and once Marida sensed the incoming missiles, released the funnels that were just recharged. The psycommu devices danced and swirled about, letting out crossing beams, triggering 2, 3 explosion rings, and caused the countless scorching debris to scatter towards the Shoal Space region.

Part 13

The space debris, which had triggered the motion sensors approximately 10 minutes ago, increased in numbers, and had become a meteorain passing by at high speeds as they appeared on the all-view monitor. There were melted bits of metal even after dodging, grazing the Base Jabbers that was shaking and moving behind. (What's going on…!) Watts Stepney's voice echoed with the tremors of the stabilizing burners that was activated from time to time, entering the ears of Nigel Garrett, who was seated in the " Jesta".

(Even if this is the Shoal Space Region, there's too many of these things.)

(We haven't reached there yet. This is debris that's just created."

Daryl McGuinness said, and at the same time, a detailed visual of a space wreckage reached them. Though Nigel had some idea of it, he still let out a gasp.€ The CG corrected visual showed the mechanical arm of a mobile suit—and one could clearly tell from that unique sleeve design that it belonged to a "Sleeve" machine.

The mechanical arm was probably separated from an exploded machine, and there were many unknown bits floating around, flying past at bullet speed.

It had been 9 hours since they were tasked to head off to the Shoal Space region midway through their journey to the "L1 Langrange Point". The 3 "Jestas" had their own Base Jabbers, and the wreckage, which they had not seen for quite a while, was actually part of the debris. It was true it was not the Shoal Space region yet, and the lights of battle flashing at their desination were seemingly helping the Shoal Space Region expand, creating new debris. (How many units are attacking…) Nigel however ignored Watts' murmuer as he stared at the ongoing battle far away. He had noticed beams and explosions 30 minutes ago, and these continued to happen without pause; however, the scale of this was not too large. These lights were focused at a particular area however, and it seemed they were headed to the Shoal Space Region; if it were two large forces fighting, one could see that the size of the battlefield would be larger.

"The "Nahel Argama"…and the "Unicorn"?"

Looking at the scenario, there was no other guesses. The Londo Bell ship—the rebel ship that was to be arrested under the behest of the army, was fighting alone against the "Sleeves" fleet, headed to the Shoal Space region. Nigel frowned at this unexpected development, but was troubled as he sensed this was not unexpected. (Leader, our Base Jabber fuel's at their limit.) Daryl's voice rang, yet it seemed so distant.

(We have to turn here if we want to head towards the rendezvous point with the “General Revil”. We’ll end up in the battlefield at this rate.)

It had been 2 hours since the Base Jabber abandoned the boosters with the depleted fuel and advanced forward only with its thrusters. Even if they were to turn here, the thrusters would have been depleted by the time they rendezvous with the “General Revil”, and the “Jesta” might have to climb back on board through its own hands. “That’s true…” Nigel answered as he continued to stare at the flickering lights of battle that was luring him. He knew, common sense-wise, that he should turn back, but he just could not make the decision. There seemed to be an unknown ‘presence’ amidst the lights of battle. Perhaps he was tired?

This was probably the case. A little nap on the Base Jabber would be insufficient in removing the fatigue of wearing a normal suit for an entire day. It would be better to wait for Riddhe’s “ Banshee” and analyse the situation. Nigel opened the helmet visor, and rubbed his eyes littered with eyewax, (What’s this voice?) but lifted his eyelids once he heard Watts.

He increased the volume of the wireless communicator and paid close attention. There seemed to be someone’s voice ringing amidst the static, causing his heart to jump. (It’s a girl’s voice, she’s saying something.) Daryl’s voice rang, and upon hearing this, Nigel adjusted the wireless communicator frequency.

(…There is no meaning in fighting. This "Nahel Argama" is no longer a Federation or Zeon ship. Our aim is simply to prevent the "Laplace Box" from being misused.)

He could finally hear a girl's voice, (What's that Box anyway!?) but Watts' outburst overpowered it. "Shut up!" Nigel hissed back as he lisened in on the voice in the communicator, coming from the battlefield.

(The fighting that had occurred during this past month revolved around the "Laplace Box". People said it has the power to topple the Federation, and perhaps it may bring a new light to Neo Zeon. But we do not live in a world where people can carry out unconscionable conduct. If we do not find a path where people on both Space and Earth can coexist, we will only renact the One Year War. As a member inheriting the blood of the Zabi family, I have a duty to prevent this from happening.)

(A heir to the Zabi family. That's…)

Daryl's gasp rang through the wireless, but Nigel focused on the name Mineva Zabi in his heart, and listned in onto this fading voice with his entire body.

(We are all as One, including the people hearing this broadcast. We, as one humanity, have the possibility of expanding throughout this space, but are confined within the cramped Earth Celestial Sphere. To anyone, no matter who you are, please help us

, let us through, so that the light of possibilities would not disappear. We do not have time to waste on this battle. We are doing this for everyone to survive…)

The noise got worse, and the voice, which seeminglybelonged to the girl called Mineva, faded quickly. Nigel could not hear any of the voice no matter how he adjusted the frequency, lowered the volume of the wireless communicator which was left only with noise. He let out a sigh of breath accumulated within him, and looked into space. He felt goosebumps all over his body, and his heart continued to throb violently. *What's going on?* He did not know how to view this situation, and the three "Jestas" were practically in a fog as silence descended upon them. (What's going on?) Finally, Daryl asked,

(The "Nahel Argama", with Mineva Zabi on board, is actually fighting a Neo Zeon fleet…)

"I don't know. It doesn't look like a Disruption Operation… looks like we still have lots of things we don't know about."

All contact with the "Nahel Argama" was lost since the moment it latched on with the disguised Neo Zeon ship. If it had Mineva on board…Nigel tried to think, but could only conclude that there was insufficient information, and turned his stare back to the flares of battle at their destination. The lights seemed to be beckoning for him—*is it because of the voice that seems to belong to Mineva?* Just as he was pondering for no real reason, (Hey, Watts!?) Daryl's outcry rang, and a thruster flare came from a unit behind Nigel.

(Stop yapping and go save them. We're already here now. There's no reason for us to do nothing, right?)

Watts' "Jesta Cannon" left the Base Jabber, and its thick body, padded with extra armor, leapt forward. But though this man was headstrong and reckless, Nigel felt from his actions that there was an urge wanting Nigel himself to make a decision, and he swallowed his urge to stop the other man. *That guy noticed it too?* As he pondered, Daryl's "Jesta" moved along Nigel's, (Hold it!) And there was a holler on the wireless.

(We don't know what's going on. What are you trying to do?)

(A Federation ship's fighting with a Neo Zeon fleet. There's only one obvious thing we can do!)

Nigel ostensibly saw Daryl's speechless expression, and was amused by Watts' overly simplistic logic, "This seems reasonable too." He said. (Leader…!) Daryl answered back, his tone filled with criticism.

(There's a girl pleading for help. What kind of men are we to ignore her?)

The "Jesta Cannon" lit its thrusters and started to accelerate, as if there was no need for another reason. Watts too certainly understood how dangerous it would be to interfere without being certain of the situation, but Nigel believed Watts too was being called, and murmured the one thing he should do in this situation. He felt the bloodrush in his mind fade away, and let out a wry

look. (Seriously…what do we do?) Daryl let out a sigh, and as Nigel looked over at his unit, he affirmed that the former had felt the same, and held onto the control stick.

"No choice now. We'll follow him."

The "Jesta" thrusters were still intact, and it was very easy to reach the battlefield at such a short distance. Even if the fuel was depleted, they could request the "Nahel Argama" to take them in. With this shred of minimal rationality left, Nigel detached his unit from the Base Jabber. "Go back to the "General Revil" first. I'll leave the reporting to you." He notified the pilots on the Base Jabbers, and stepped on the pedal without waiting for their answers.

The "Jestas" floated up from the Base Jabbers, and started to accelerate with the help of the lit main thrusters. Daryl's machine followed behind, and the two machines flew past the incoming debris to catch up to Watts' machine, which had gone on first. *Right, we came all the way here. There's no reason for us to turn back without doing anything. The "Unicorn", Mineva, the "Laplace Box". We 've been dragged along by these things, so at least we have to see the truth for ourselves.* Nigel readied his beam rifle to a position where he could fire at will, and stared at the battlefield with many lingering 'presences'. The three units let out long tails of thruster flares, ostensibly shaking off the despondence from being fastened on the Base Jabbers, and passed through the space region filled with debris.

Part 14

(…40% of the entire force has been neutralized, and the entire fleet is retreating back to the Shoal Space region. Our Gajumal force will open the last line of defense here, so please hurry to " Industrial 7" as soon as possibly, Captain. The "Mock Trojan Horse " is closing in.)

Commander Gajumal's expectant face appeared on the communication panel 10 inches wide, and it was this aspect that was unforgivable. *They look as if they was a member of a stable world, but his viewpoint was hindered by his rigid imagination, and when there' s something unexpected, they either exclaim that it's impossible, will not face it, or start shifting blame, looking all loyal and courageous, saying that they did all they can do. These foolish adults are all like this, always thinking that they just need to maintain their pride even if the world's destroyed.*

It had been 5 hours since they were taken in by the flagship of the Gajumal fleet, the "Guskor". The emergency repairs on the " Rozen Zulu", which had lost an arm, was completed, and Frontal's squad was ready to be deployed, but this was not the issue they were facing. Angelo Sauper was at a corner of the mobile suit deck, facing the communication panel on the catwalk wall in the maintenance side, looking around at the faces of the subordinates standing to the side.

The two of them were pilots from the escort squad, in their early 20s. Lieutenant Rakar and Ensign Reil remained still as they continued to stare at their superior officer, who was ready to die, with dignity and respect. The pilots at the shackles too looked solemn as they stared at the monitor, with no intention to call out the commander for wasting fighting strength due to his little

understanding. *Why? Why isn't anyone angry? It's because of people like Garumal that our country's destroyed. We're the ones suffering from their indecisiveness and debts.*

"There's only one empty vessel, and you mess it up!"

The dissatisfaction exploded from Angelo's mouth in the form of a roar, and he felt Rakar and everyone else gasp. Garumal did not seem to notice the fact that a lower-ranked personnel lashed out at him, and was taken back. Angelo glared at their faces and took a step closer to the monitor.

"The enemy only has a "Gundam" as its main fighting force! Concentrate your attacks on it! It's because you're still gathering your fleet obediently—!"

"I'll sortie this time, Commander Garumal."

Someone suddenly interjected, and interrupted Angelo's words with a nonchalant tone. The latter turned behind, and saw a masked face from beyond the shoulders of his subordinates. He did not know where he could vent his frustrations on (But Captain , you…) Garumal gave a skeptical voice, "I want to extinguish the flames now." Full Frontal said as he looked over.

"I'll bring the escort squad along. The deployed forces are to take independent action. Please notify the frontlines."

(Yes! Good luck!)

Garumal said as he saluted, showing a look Angelo felt belonged to those irrespsonsible adults. *They started a war, seeking death, and turned the world upside down; they left their debts for us to pay, and they bear responsibility, thinking that it's martyrdom for the greater good. This is the one thing I really can't stand about them. We must at least make them embarrassed over their own imcompetence. How else are they going to pay this debt!* Angelo pursued after the red silhouette which turned to leave, and left the wall of escort squad members, "Captain…!" he protested, but as Frontal crossed the handrail of the catwalk, "I told you before", he said as he turned his masked face aside slightly.

"The pilot of the "Unicorn Gundam" is a Newtype, and a power Newtype will affect the people around him. It is better to assume the current "Mock Trojan Horse" as an actual Newtype Corp."

The white glove grabbed onto the handrail, and the tall, hulking figure floated in the mobile suit deck. The fiery red armor of the " Sinanju", outfitted with its equipment, looked dazzling behind Frontal's lush blond hair that was floating about.

"Also, they do have Lieutenant Marida's "Kshatriya". Numbers alone won't be able to beat Newtypes. The fleet will be broken through soon."

The words indicated that he knew this would happen, and this caused Angelo to relax his shoulders and shake off his unhappiness. *This strong directiveness, merciless penetration for our objective, will ultimately guide us to our final victory, bring order to the world in chaos, and purify the blood-stained bedsheet.*

We don't need a cause, personal reputations and deignity. As long as we are with this mask, who will never back down when pitted against the world, who has the power to surpass humanity— "It's your turn now, Angelo." Angelo embraced Frontal's words, which had been imposed on him.

"Show me the true value of the "Rozen Zulu". Hurry with the preparations."

"Yes! I'll definitely dispatch the "Unicorn Gundam" for you. I' m betting on your life."

My life's insufficient to wager on; the term 'determination' only comes into effect when betting on the most valuable things in this world. "I'm looking forward to it." Frontal answered and left the handrail, whilst Angelo stood still and watched him leave.

"Don't get devoured by him. It'll be a lonely sight without that rose every day."

The masked face said from beyond the shoulder, causing Angelo to hallucinate seeing the blue eyes under the mask. *I won't get swallowed by it. My life, my body are already a part of you.* "Yes…!" Angelo brought his heels together and swallowed his surging emotions as he watched Frontal leave. Frontal had completely excluded Angelo from his thoughts, and once the latter watched him leave and enter the "Sinanju" cockpit, Angelo looked back at the massive "Rozen Zulu" at the hangar beside him.

The machine had lost its right hand, and was directly fitted with a shield; the Musaka-class mobile suit deck was too narrow for it. The shield included mega particle diffusion cannons, and also a ' unique equipment' against the "Unicorn" on the backpack. Angelo stared at the massiveness that showed all these aspects, and felt that he, at this point, would not lose even if he were to take on the entire world. He felt the majestic appearance fitted him, and he curled his lips aupwards. The shield fitted on the right hand directly could fire an INCOM claw, just like the remaining left hand, and fire in all directions through the scattered mega particle cannons. *I don't care if the enemy's a Newtype or something else, it's going to be effortless stopping a single unit. And with this 'unique equipment', I'll definitely bury the "Unicorn" for good this time, together with that arrogant pilot who had the talent the Captain recognized, but irresponsibily forsaken us with such pretty words.*

"Banagher Links. It'll be over this time…!"

I'm going to shred whatever small possibility there is and prove to the Captain that he's wrong. Angelo put on his helmet and kicked himself off the handrail of the catwalk. The raised shoulder armor was stacked up like rose petals, and the "Rozen Zulu" silently awaited the arrival of its owner.

Part 15

He kept thinking of moving forward, but his thoughts were forced back by the hard pressure closing in from the front. The

pressure was then transformed into physical projectiles at the next instant, the motion sensor picking them up, and in less than half a second, he reached the point of contact.

It happened after he entered the Shoal Spaceregio and broke past the 4th fleet. Banagher pulled the control stick before the siren rang, and fired the remaining anti-ship missiles. He saw them explode at close range, triggering explosions from the trail of missiles. Another wave of pressure came in a similar trajectory however before the expanding rings of explosions became blueish-white gas, and a second volley of missiles came in two groups. His senses have picked up on the origin of the killing intent, and the "Unicorn Gundam" received the signal as its thrusters flared, practically flying in a perpendicular path.

The missiles loaded on the machine let out gaseous trails, and the enemy units, resembling missiles, closed in quickly. Banagher saw the expanded window indicate AMX-102 "Zssa" for an instant , detached the Hyper Bazookas on the shoulders, and readied them on the hands of the "Unicorn Gundam". The missile launchers embedded on the barrel turned 90 degrees, and once they were pointed in the same direction as the muzzles, the two bazooks and missiles were fired in unison. The bazooka shots had a faster initial velocity than the missiles as they exploded on the enemy's path, released hundreds of metal balls. Afterwards, the slower anti-ship missiles advanced in on the slowed "Zssas".

One of them took a direct hit, was blown to bits, and became a fireball; at that instant, the remaining unit abandoned the large booster it was carrying on its back, and once the booster was buried amidst the countless metal balls, the "Zssa" showed its

actual mobile suit form, its short body and stout limbs resemble a miniature puppet. It did not look suited for space combat, fired the hidden mini missiles hidden in its legs, drew its beam saber, and charged over. Banagher was highly startled by the reckless pilot who did not care about the consequences or the unit's specificiations, and then looked frustrated.

"You started it…!"

Banagher dodged the incoming beam saber slash, and once they crossed each other, delivered a kick to its head. He then fired the head Vulcan guns at the "Zssa", still persistent on attack, and heard a creaking sound from the machine at the same time.The " Zssa" was thoroughly perforated by the 60mm bullets, and the winds from the explosion blew the "Unicorn Gundam" aside, returning it to its original trajectory when it stopped. The air pockets pressing on the lower body shrank as the G-force was lowered, and the bloodrush to the head gradually faded away. However, the uneasy feeling of the muscles being ripped lingered on the flesh.

"That's the 25th…26th?"

Banagher's shoulders were humping as he panted, as he opened his helmet visor to wipe the sweat off his head. His headache lingered, and there was a numbing pain on his compressed lower body. He fired the missile launchers to purge the bolts, and as he checked the remaining 30% of his missiles, the machine turned about, catching sight of the surroundings. He could only see the countless space debris of different sizes, floating about, yet the lights from "Industrial 7" could not be seen. He could see fireballs

flashing behind him. Were they from the units destroyed by the " Kshatriya"?

"I'm too far from Miss Marida. The "Nahel Argama"…"

It had been a long while since he broke contact with the "Nahel Argama' laser communication. He summoned the rear surveillance visuals on the expanded window at the back, and reached his hand for the drinking tube. At that moment, a shrill alarm rang, and he instinctively closed his helments.

3 "Geara Zulus" were riding on "Ga Zowmnns", approaching from above. Banagher panicked, lamenting that he did not notice their presences, and the 3 units scattered, while the small missiles from the "Ga Zowmnn" exploded arolund the "Unicorn Gundam" . Banagher managed escape from the vortexs of explosion lights in the nick of time, and fired the remaining 360mm shot from the bazooka in his right hand. The explosion expanded into a sphere, and the scattered metal balls dealt with a "Ga Zowmnn". Banagher escaped the "Geara Zulu" Strum Faust, and as it intended to fight back with its Beam Gatling Gun, there were red words in a corner of his eyes, and a different siren hailed, ringing in Banagher's eyes.

The pilot's lifesign monitor flickered with a red light below the flashing NT-D signal. The time limit was up—*at this moment!* " Hold it! I can still fight!" The exclaimation however was overpowered by the trembling sounds of the machine's armor sliding back, and at that moment, the enemy's shots were gathered on the "Unicorn", which had lost the appearance of the "Gundam"

. The exploding Strum Faust flashed in front of the all-view monitor, and the scattered particles from the grazing beams hit the body. Banagher evaded subconsciously as he hollered,

"Don't change back now! There're still enemies!"

There was suddenly a sharp pain deep within his nostrils, causing the remaining voice to be stuck in his throat. Banagher felt a warm feeling scatter from the center of his face, spotted the blood blobs leaking from his nostrils, and hurriedly opened his helmet visor. He pushed aside the nose bleed which was floating in the form of bubbles, and wiped away with the back of his glove as he fired the beam Gatling gun at the incoming enemy. His movements were obviously dulled, and with only his thoughts running first, the machine was unable to catch up with the body.

"Because of this…!"

He would not be able to return to Audrey, he would not be able to lead Marida to the ice cream shop; He was at his limit. Banagher shook aside the words appearing in his mind, and focused on the enemies coming in three directions. He threw the Hyper Bazooka at the enemy coming from the bottom, and reached for the beam saber. *It's too slow. I won't be able to make it.* The "Geara Zulu" sliced the bazooka apart, and reached the front of the "Unicorn" through the thrust of the "Ga Zowmnn". The moment Banagher's widened eyes started at its monoeye, another beam shot in from another direction, and the "Geara Zulu", shot through, exploded up close.

"What…?"

The machine, shaken by the shockwaves, repositioned itself, and scanned around. 3 thruster flares could be seen from afar, and another beam came flying in. Banagher saw the incoming enemy units scatter like they were blown apart, and a "Ga Zowmnn", transformed into mobile suit form, explode in a chain of explosions , probably triggered from grenade explosions. This light shone upon the neighboring "Geara Zulu" and the interfering 3 mobile suits, the deep blue humanoid forms, each equipped with goggles on their main cameras, appeared in Banagher's sights.

"A Federation new model? From where?"

Banagher did not think there would be reinforcements at this moment, and pointed his reticule at the three units. (Do you hear us? "Unicorn" pilot?) At this moment, there was a voice mixed with the noise, and he blinked, not knowing what happened.

(We're the Tri-Stars of the Londo Bell supporting you. Retreat for the moment while the system cools off.)

Once these words were conveyed, the unit in the front moved above the "Unicorn", and fired a screen of shots at a nearby " Geara Zulu". The second deals a fatal blow to the "Ga Zowmnn", and the light from the explosion caused the 3rd unit to float in the air. This 3rd unit was similar to the other two, but was a heavy armor version, with added armor and two cannons; it fired its large rifle, and two beams came from its dual barrel. The "Ga Zowmnn" in mobile armor form was knocked aside, and passed below Banagher as it decelerated rapidly.

"Londo Bell's, Tri-Stars…?"

Banagher sensed that he met them before, but he did not know when; all he could remember was that they were similar machines to the ones he spotted on the "Ra Cailum". The pilots seemed to be very skilled, and in the meantime, Banagher focused on grasping the locations of all the units around. He watched the 3 machines move in sync as he aimed at the enemy units. 4 lines of fire flashed about, turning the incoming miniature missiles into new spheres of explosions.

Part 16

Once the "Ga Zowmnn" fired all its missiles, it got shot down by the "Jesta Cannon", and exploded. Nigel fired his own beam rifle as well, hitting a "Geara Zulu" in the abdomen, and once he sensed the looming presence following up, he glanced at the " Unicorn" near his feet on the all-view monitor.

The white machine with the lone horn retreated from the defense line, probably sensing that there was reinforcement. " Listen to us!" Nigel called out as he pushed the "Jesta" thrusters to the maximum output.

"Our "Jestas" are originally designed to back up the "Unicorn". We'll take over and deal with the enemies while you take a bre—"

He endured the G force pressing on his eyeballs, and drew the beam saber hidden in the arm. The "Geara Zulu" closing in on the "Unicorn" path too drew a beam hook, and once their beam blades clashed, the beam particles slice through the abdomen.

"—ath.

Nigel finished the rest of the line with his back against the " Geara Zulu", exploded into a fireball once its generator was ignited. (But…!) the pilot's voice could be heard, (How dare you say 'what' if you're a soldier!?) but Watts' roar overpowered it, and Watts proceeded to close in on the enemy ranks, firing a beam that grazed above Nigel's head unit.

(I won't demand to know who you are now, but be ready. Once we're over this, I'll ask what's going on.)

Daryl's "Jesta" then followed up, firing a screen of shots to hold off the looming enemy forces. The enemy comprised of 4 units, two "Geara Zulus" and two "Geara Doga", lined in a diamond. Nigel saw the "Unicorn" retreat behind Daryl's machine through the CG-corrected visual on the expanded window, and controlled it burners to coordinate with Watts' "Jesta Cannon". Nigel fired a beam rifle at the "Geara Doga" in front, and moved his own unit such that the "Jesta" formed a triangle. He was surprised however to find the "Unicorn" positioned delicately in the axle; it was impossible to remain in the middle of the defense array for this long without grasping the movements of the three machines.

"Great judgment…"

Who is that pilot? Nigel was driven by the intrigue that rose in him at this point, and glanced at the expanded window showing the white machine. Suddenly, there was a looming pressure different from the enemy machines in front of them, and he instinctively reacted, causing the "Jesta" to rise.

"Scatter!"

Daryl and Watts moved their machines through a spinal reflex in response to the voice as well. At the same time, a large mega-particle beam grazed the feet, and Nigel stared at where it came from. It was a ship cannon—and he felt this wall-like pressure formed by this enemy ship. The sense, different from the usual 5 senses, brought a feeling that scattered into tiny killing intents, poking through Nigel's head. (Watts!) This feeling became that of a voice.

(I see it!)

Watts answered back, and the "Jesta Cannon" flew towards where the beam came from with all its firepower. The beam cannons, rifle and Gatling guns tore trails of consecutive fires, turning 2 "Gaza D" fleets into fireballs as they approached along with the cannon shots. "Don't you dare get there!" Daryl too yelled out as a "Geara Zulu" charged at the "Unicorn", turning the " Geara Zulu" into a fireball. Nigel threw a grenade at a "Geara Doga", lit by the lights of the explosions, and the drum-sized grenade exploded in its lap, causing an expanding ring of light to engulf the moss-green machine. A sleeved mechanical arm then spun about as it got sucked into vacuum, with the instantly cooled, blueish-white gaseous explosion as the background.

The enemy units were obviously rattled after having lost their fellow units, and retreated back. They managed to take down a medium-sized fleet in an instant—even a mock battle against rookies would not net such a high score. (Heheh. The situation's

getting scarily good.) Nigel however did not have any response to this line from Watts as he let out a sigh. (Yeah. It's like there's an extra eye behind us.) He then heard Daryl say this, and stared at the "Unicorn" located in the middle of the triangle.

"Is it because of that guy…?"

There was no logic to be stated, but he could sense, without a doubt, that something changed once they made contact with the " Unicorn". They sensed each other, and their presences were gradually enlarging. They only felt an overwhelming pressure from the white unit when they battled it on Earth, but it was embracing them with some form of warmth. *If this network of perceptions, which seems to cause our heads to throb, is the truth behind the power that called us here—*

A heavy, sharp hostile intent interfered with their common senses, causing their 4 units to scatter. The beam then passed by them, and the scattered particles grazed upon the "Jesta" that had evaded just in time. *It's a powerful enemy,* Nigel immediately understood this, and his body moved on its own as he searched for the source of this hostility at the other end of the beam.

It came in a similar direction as that of the ship cannon—but something was disappear. The beams were coming from behind, the side of the feet, and diagonally above, teasing the 4 units that were evading. At the same time, the array of killing intent with an unknown core closed in from all directions (Argh!?) (This guy is from back then…!) Watts and Daryl grunted, and Nigel felt the presence of that object as goosebumps rose on his skin. The large Incom cable swung about like a whip, and the attacks all around

flashed without ceasing. At this moment, a unique-shaped machine bore thruster lights on its back as it flashed by the all-view monitor.

"It's that rose-shaped mobile suit…!?"

The abnormally raised shoulder armor plates gave it its unique shape, and it was certainly unforgettable. It was the purple machine that was with the Red Comet's "Sinanju", and decimated the 16th Mission Fleet, which comprised of the "Carrot" and "Clog " ships. The Incom cannons graze past the machine, and another beam came in from another direction, breaking through the triangular formation of the Tri-Stars, just as before. Nigel saw two "Geara Zulu" with launcher cannons behind the purple machine. (Please fall back!) A voice however stopped him from wanting to attack.

(I'll leave the enemy units behind to you! That guy's aim is..!)

The call was cuts off, and the "Unicorn" was thrusted forward by the booster rockets on the back as it charged at the rose machine . The Incoms pursuing it continued to let beams fly, and the white machine dodged about like a locust as it departed, leaving Nigel speechless by how fast it was before he could even provide cover, (Leader!) He was awakened by Daryl's call, and hurriedly grabbed onto the control stick again.

"Follow the "Unicorn" instructions. If that purple guy's here, the Red Comet should be nearby. Pay attention!"

He gave the order, and swapped the E-pack of the rifle. The two "Geara Zulus" closing in fired their beam launchers again, and Nigel saw the high-powered mega-particle cannons shine upon Daryl and Watts' unit. He held his breath, focused and squeezed the trigger. It was not their job to deal with the small fries, and they could not fully accept this ludicrous feeling. *But it's better to do this, to obey the "Unicorn" instructions on this battle*. This notion however clearly appeared in his mind.

Part 17

Banagher fired the Beam Gatling guns on his beam, and squeezed his fingers on the Hyper Bazooka on the left hand. A beam flying from the bottom hit the bazooka directly, causing Banagher to let go of it was it was knocked aside.

The Hyper Bazooka exploded from within, and was devoured by light, whilst the shockwave rattled the "Unicorn". The NT-D sign had yet to shine, and the machine's responses were still dull. Banagher used up the last bit of booster fuel left, and broke away from the "Rozen Zulu" for the time being. The Incoms that got behind him flashed 2, 3 times, and the beams of mega particles grazed beside him.

"Funnel…no, it has cables."

The long cables let out a long arc, and appeared in the darkness from time to time, having been shone upon by the dazzling light of the beams. Of the 2 Incom extended from the "Rozen Zulu" arms, one of them was a claw-type with a manipulator function, while

the other was a shield-type with mega particle cannons installed—this was the terrifying one. It seemed to have a deflection function, as the beams fired from the 3 cannons would spread and scatter lots of scorching particles in a wide area. Banagher fired his 6 Beam Gatling guns to hold off the remote cannons commonly dubbed as Incoms, drew, his beam saber, and charged forward. Once the cable was cut, the Incoms would be nullified, but the enemy would not allow him to do so that easily. The fast moving cable seemed to be mocking the slow "Unicorn" as it started a hail of shots, crossing in a wave while ostensibly wanting to trip him.

"Fast…!"

—Just die, you.

The instant he caught sight of the "Rozen Zulu" from beyond the rumbling cable, the voice struck his mind in the form of an icy wind. "What…?" Banagher groaned as he passed through the crossing beams and chased after the purple unit that vanished again.

—I hate your guts. What's with that model student look?

The spiteful 'voice' struck his skull from behind, and the particles scattered from the beams rained upon the "Unicorn". The left and right shields were activated, opening an I-field umbrella, but the full-psycommu had yet to show signs of awakening again. The Incoms struck the "Unicorn"< devoid of the "Gundam" eyes, like a venomous snake, and the sharp claw barely managed to scrape the ankle.

"You're not done yet, "Unicorn"…?"

—You're a stain, a stain on the white blanket. I'm going to personally eliminate you.

The snake got to the front, bared its claws and opened wide, showing the 3 cannons from deep within its mouth; and as the light of mega particles lingered, the NT-D sign reappeared again and lit up in a red light.

"It's here…!"

The impulse lashing from within the helmet exploded in the form of a weak light at the forehead. Right when the "Unicorn" lone horn was about to break into two pieces—(Don't you think about it!)a cry from reality rang just a fraction of a second earlier, and small objects were shot out from the back of the "Rozen Zulu".

6 cylindrical objects, ostensibly resembling miniature missiles, zigzagged around the "Unicorn" and transformed into antenna-like panels. In an instant, the NT-D signal quickly flashed, shrank back when they were deployed, and there were rapid alerts on the monitor regarding the malfunctioning psycommu. Banagher's nerves were being ripped along with the machines, and he let out a howl of agony as the sudden pain exploded in his skull.

Numerous warning windows appeared on the all-view monitor, and the words 'signal lost' kept flashing on it in front. The moveable frame let out rubbing sounds as they wereforcefully prevented from opening, and the pieces of sliding armor was

trembling, The lone horn could not open even though it wanted to, and shuddered slightly from within, whilst the psycoframe below it flickered randomly. Banagher saw the lights flicker intensely, but was hapless. *What? What happened?* The Intention Automatic System did not respond at all, and the "Unicorn" stood still, restrained by an invisible wave, like it was electrocuted.

"The psycommu's cut off…?"

The 6 little machines surrounded the unit, and formed an octahedron—*so these funnel like obects are the culprits behind this?* Banagher raised the control stick, aimed the reticule at the objects, and swung the beam saber down. The objects let out a burst from its thrusters to dodge the dodge, and the other 5 units moved along, maintaining an octahedron shape. After missing the attack, the "Unicorn" barely managed to turn around, and the Incoms that had flown into the octahedron slammed upon its back, causing him to feel a physical impact this time.

(How does it feel to have the psyco jammer used on you? You can't do anything if you can't transform into the "Gundam.)

The Incom grabbed onto the right booster rocket, and Angelo's voice came through the claws gnawing at the armor. Banagher repeated the unfamiliar term Psyco Jammer, took the flares of mega particles that exploded from the Incom behind him, and witnessed the all-view monitor being dyed in a scorching color..

The attack from up close caused the booster rocket fuel to explode from within, turning it into a large fireball. The "Unicorn" managed to escape in time, but decelerated as it was held back by the expanding impact, and Banagher was buried in the spinny starry space. The funnel-like Psyco Jammer surrounded the machine that was quickly decelerating, and continued to release the invisible energy. The large body of the "Rozen Zulu" twitched its monoeye, and the Incom came attacking like a sickle head—.

(It's over, Banagher Links!)

Angelo's voice was off-pitched due to delight as it permeated through the utterly terrified body, causing Banagher to sniff the stench of the death god.

Part 18

He rode upon the Hypersonic Transport chartered by Anaheim Electronics from Dakar's airport for more than 3 hours, and after

flying over the Atlantic and two-thirds of the North American continent, arrived at the Federation airforce's Anti-Air Command Base in Cheyenne.

This terrain had more beasts of burden than humans in the old centuries, and even after the tragedy of the One Year War, this fact still remained. The HST landed on the plainlands of Wyoming, overlooking the darkness of the distant Rockies before it was dawn , and the landing gear was fastened on the runway, the only concrete area in the base. Ronan, together with Martha, was welcomed by his peers at the Senate Council, and rode on the military electric car; he was whisked into the underground Anti-Air Command Base before he could glance at the moonless night.

They passed through a tunnel-shaped entrance in the foothills, and the Command Center was at the end of this path located 1.6km deep inside. This was a place Ronan was familiar with; when the region was still called the United States of America, this base was built within the mountains to shield against any enemy nation's nuclear attack. The facilities and system were no different from back then; there was anti-air intellgence used to watch over the North American region. After the war, it was merely a piece of junk when the surveillance satellites were separated from the radar network, and was relegated to as a place where the leftists' soldiers were dealt with carefully. However, as it was not a place easily noticed, it became a place with some unique function over the years.

When Martha talked about the 'secret way', Ronan had already anticipated it to be this place. The wall of classified military

information would not be of any use when dealing with her. He remained in the car, just like the journey before, and carelessly stared at the tunnel which could be said to be the relics of the old centuries. The hooded military electric car passed through the underground below the mountains, passed through the 25 ton blastproof door, and sent the contingent to the Anti-Air Command center.

They walked upon the uneven concrete path, was led through 3 layers of safety checks by their colleagues, and arrived at the desination. Ronan passed through the door leading into the only new place available, the space management center, and saw the exact same scene as the one he saw on the photo.

There were 6 large screens on the wall in the front, projecting the monitored conditions of the radars and the satellite surveillances. There were more than 20 of the each facing a terminal, “Mark 2, loading complete.” “Permitting the support ship “Chitose” to retreat from the firing line.” The men and women reporting in all looked anxious, and the atmosphere of an actual battle reached them naturally. Ronan heard the metal doors slam behind him, and looked around at this classified center, which he was not completely unfamiliar with. There were often Task Forces, authorized to deal with classified information, stationed here, working on their mission separately from the soldiers of the base management, which dealt with the leftists. The Cheyenne Base was dubbed as a relic of of the old era, but it was an image used to hide the existence here.

“The “System” is moving from behind “Luna II”.”

"Position controls begin. Self-rotation restrated, Gryoscope stabilized."

"Reticule control, matching the guide laser's path."

The voices of the management pinged off the tall ceiling. That ' thing' seemed to have been activiated, and Ronan, who did not know how she controlled the situation, was unhappy that she had already begun with the preparations as he wanted to glare at the relaxed looking Martha. "Welcome to the Caucasus Forest" however, he heard this from behind, and turned back. A high ranking officer was standing at the commander's seat at the back of the control room, elevated half a level higher.

"I'm Vice-Admiral Ables. We once had a chat with each other at a golf match on "Luna II"."

"I remember. Looks like Miss Martha and I have a lot of mutal friends."

He grabbed the outstretched hand, and again glared at Martha. On the surface, he was the base commander in chare of running the leftists' graveyard, but he was in charge of a secret mission only a few amongst them knew of, and was an elite general full of ambition. It would be easy for Ronan to deduce that there was something going on between him and the vixens of the Senate Council that was relying on the authority of the Vist Foundation, but this was not the moment to be dragged down by that. "May you please hear the current situation?" Martha did not look at Ables, who greeted her with a stare, as she hurriedly prompted Ronan, and the latter looked back at the screens in the front.

"This is the surveillance information obtained from the Moon, so the details aren't clear. However, it seems the "Sleeves" perimeter is being broken through. The battle's still going on though, I can't tell how it's going to go."

One of the screens showed a visual of space taken from the Moon's surface. An amateur could not tell what was going on amidst the flashing lights mixed amidst the stars. "What about " Industrial 7"?" Martha asked.

"Currently, we've executed a spaceway control, and up till this point, there hasn't been any ship moving in and out from the docks. It seems the colony builder there was not activated, probably because of the damage suffered during the terrorist attack."

The image was switched, and the projected visual became that of the sealed colony that was undergoing construction. Every space colony should be all in the same shape, but this colony had a unique shape with one end connected to the colony builder, and one could tell it was the "Industrial 7" that made the headlines because of the terrorist attack. It was an industrial port, and logically, there would be ships moving around the clock, but there was definitely no space light to be seen near the port. The colony builder too remained silent, and its snail-likeexterior remained hidden in the Shoal space.

"Targetting is complete, and we will proceed into automatic-tracking. Considering the space debris left in the path of fire, we plan to fire at 50% outpiut.This is the first actual firing after repair, but there's no issue with the activation. We can fire

only at the colony builder while minimizing the impact on the colony to the minimum."

Ables said, "That's how it is, Chairman Ronan." and Martha followed up. Ronan gulped.

"We just need your approval from now on. This will solve everything."

There was a lot of burdensome work for the Settlement Issues Council and the Vist Foundation to deal with even after working together, whether it was to explain to the internal government, or the manipulating of the media; Martha's expression however was coldly aloof. Ronan did not immediately answer as he stared at the "Industrial 7" in the image, "Surveillance satellite K7 has caught sight of the "system"."at the same time, he heard the voice from the operator.

"Expand the visual." Ables commanded. The middle screen showed the image of Earth taken at low orbit, its silhouette encased in the thin atmosphere, expanded in phases. As the sun began to shine behind Earth, the anti-glare filtered visual approached it, and there appeared a cylindrical object with the bright light in the expanded background.

This obect was orbiting in one of the Lagrange Points created between Earth and the Moon, the L3 resonance points, and when viewed from afar, was a common sealed colony just like " Industrial 7". It was only half the size of an ordinary colony, but there was an abnormally large number of solar panels around it, and more intriguingly, there was an exposed, severed part at one

end, exposing the inside hollow in space—this large barrel-like appearance obviously was not designed for human living. It was an abnormally shaped construct, a colony, and yet not one, 15km long, and more than 6km in diameter. It was…

"The colony laser "Gryps 2", the ultimate weapon of destruction that uses the colony itself as a barrel.

Martha said. Ables glanced over at her face, but Ronan did not mind as he continued to stare at the screen.

"It's infamous because of the internal conflicts after the war, but we've been secretly rebuilding it and integrating it into the fleet assembly plan…such great foresight, I must say. Did you assume this will happen?"

Martha's stare at Ronan was full of derision, and the latter inadvertently glared back at her sidelong face, wanting to say something. "The "Nahel Argama" and the "Unicorn" have entered the Shoal Space region. However, he was interrupted by this, and could only remain silent.

"We've considered other strategies, but we can't guarantee that we can stop them. Once we detect that either them or Neo Zeon will reach the "Box" first…"

There'll be no other choice, her expression was stating this. If they used the colony laser, most of their issues would be settled. Ronan glanced his sweaty palms, and stared at the screen showing tis laser.

It was an unprecedented, said to be able to destroy entire colonies when fired at full output. The “Gryps 2” overlooked Ronan from hige above as the latter held its trigger, and pointed its large muzzle at the Shoal Space region containing “Industrial 7”—where the “Laplace Box” laid in slumber.

Chapter 2

Part 1

Due to the uneven gravitational pulls between Earth and the Moon, it gave the impression that garbage could gather easily in the vacuumed space. Of course, they were not lingering at one point, but rather, moving around the entire area at several kilometers per second. However, if one was to get in and move at a similar velocity, it would feel no different from floating amidst the countless debris. The debris field comprising of dust from the colonies, battleships or mobile suit wreckage were the remnants of the war that could not be removed even after a hundred years. A chilly presence entered the cockpit, and ostensibly, the souls of all the people killed were gather here.

No, this was not it. Perhaps the eerie feeling was the multiple killing intents crossing each other at this moment, the screams of the souls gathered in space. Riddhe Marcenas lifted his head and stared upon the flames of the battlefield flashing in front of him. He could see small lights continue to flicker amidst the floating debris. There was no sound, no heat, just a battlefield in space. There was a frosty aura from within, bringing about goosebumps, with a certain person's voice—

"This feeling…is that Banagher?"

He pressed at his head, which took a slight jolt, and muttered to himself. He knew he was getting too sensitive; the "Banshee" psycommu, functioning as a full psycoframe, would sometimes

cause the pilot's neural waves to diffuse, and noise to echo in his perception. It was impossible to pick up a specific target's neural wave at this distance. Though he shook his head assuming he was thinking too much, the name Banagher was ever so depressing to him, and lingered in his mouth with a nauseating bitterness.

"Audrey…Mineva Zabi…?"

This bitterness summoned another name. He was no longer able to determine his own feelings, and looked upon the sting stabbing at his chest. *What am I doing here?* Riddhe asked himself, (Master Ensign Secret Agent, do you hear me?) and at the next moment, an overly courteous voice came through the communication channel, causing him to hurriedly lean back on the linear seat again.

(There's a weird message from the "General Revil". It seems that big shot from Anaheim's coming here on a Base Jabber.)

"Alberto…?"

Riddhe inadvertently asked as he looked down along with the main camera. The "Banshee" was on a Base Jabber platform, and he could peer down at its head between the two manipulators holding onto its grip. He could not see the inside of the cockpit, which was covered by armor, but one could imagine the officers giving disgruntled looks at each other as they had to listen to this brat of a Special Agent Ensign. To the veteran soldiers, there was nothing more infuriating than seeing a mischievous brat abuse his special authority and remain silent.

The shield of that authority—Alberto, was arriving. Riddhe was practically a cargo for the past 9 hours, and there was a dull tremor passing through his body. He pricked his ears to the the voice from the contact loop, and it seemed the officer did not intend to ask to me in the first place. (It seems they're sending backup supplies for the "Banshee".) He said nonchalantly.

(Position wise, they'll meet us in an hour if we slow down immediately. Do we wait?)

"What's inside the backup supplies?"

(I don't know. There's too much debris, I can't secure the laser communicator. It's your call whether you want to wait or go.)

There was no sense of spitefulness in the escort officer's voice. Riddhe turned his stare right to the right, and saw flashes of explosions in the CG-corrected space.

It had been 30 minutes since they entered the Shoal Space region, and the lights of battle continued to multiply. Even after purging all the boosters, it would take less than an hour to reach the battle. Alberto definitely had his own reasons for making the trip here, and it might be better to wait for him. However, the battle situation might change in some way. What would happen if the "Nahel Argama" reached the "Laplace Box" with the "Unicorn " leading the way?

A shiver permeated through Riddhe's body, causing him to experience goosebumps. The opening of this "Box" would topple

the world—and more importantly, he felt terrified of seeing everything end without being able to grasp the situation. He did not think too much, but decided in his heart that he could not wait on, "Continue on." He spoke stiffly,

"Maintain our current speed. We'll ambush the enemy in front of "Industrial 7" as planned."

Riddhe was also concerned about the contents of the support goods, but it definitely would not be a new equipment developed in such a short time, even if it was a joke. He muttered to himself, *I have to prevent the "Box" from being opened. I have to maintain the order of the world. I have to finish this mission even if I have to do this alone. This is the reason why I'm here.* However, there was a voice in the psycommu, *Is it?* He felt that voice knock on him, (Roger that) but did not clearly hear this reply from the officer.

He bit his lips and stared at the distant battlefield. The debris floated around him slowly, and made it impossible to tell that he was moving at high speeds. Upon thinking about how this silence, which practically severed him from the world, would continue for almost an hour, he had the impulse to accelerate even if he had to finish the booster fuel.

Part 2

The 4 CIWS located at the rear engine block fired its anti-mobile suit 60mm machine gun turrets. The "Geara Doga", pursued by the crossing fires, made its way to the aft, and aimed its beam machine gun at the main thruster.

But right before it could fire the mega particles from its muzzle, the "Loto" hiding on the ship leapt off the deck and fired the Gatling gun mounted on its right shoulder. The "Loto" was a machine 2 sizes smaller than an ordinary unit, but the precise projectile hit the abdomen of the "Geara Doga", causing the unit with the Zeon insignia on the sleeve to explode. The ring of explosion expanded near the "Nahel Argama", and the shockwave and shrapnel rained above the "Loto", lying prone on the deck. The ship let out a rattling noise due to the shrapnel hitting it, and Otto, upon seeing the external surveillance monitors being covered in white light "NOW!" roared with a voice no quieter than the explosion.

"Return Juliet 006 to the ship! Are you ready, mechanics!?"

(We can finish in 7 minutes!) The mechanics team response echoed amidst the bridge, shaken by the shockwaves, as the rear surveillance cameras showed a "Stark Jegan". The pale green humanoid had depleted its anti-ship missiles, and stumbled towards the deck, looking like a walking corpse. *Looks like we have to use the emergency landing net.* Otto sensed that it would be bad if they were being fired upon when taking in a unit, and the moment he glanced aside at the portside sensor panel, a "Geara Zulu" grazed by, causing him to shiver.

He saw a painted line on its right arm, probably for identification, and heaved a sigh of relief. This "Geara Zulu" had the identification logo of the Republic Army's anti-air identification, and was definitely on their side. It was a unit belonging to the "Garencieres", labeled with the code G.

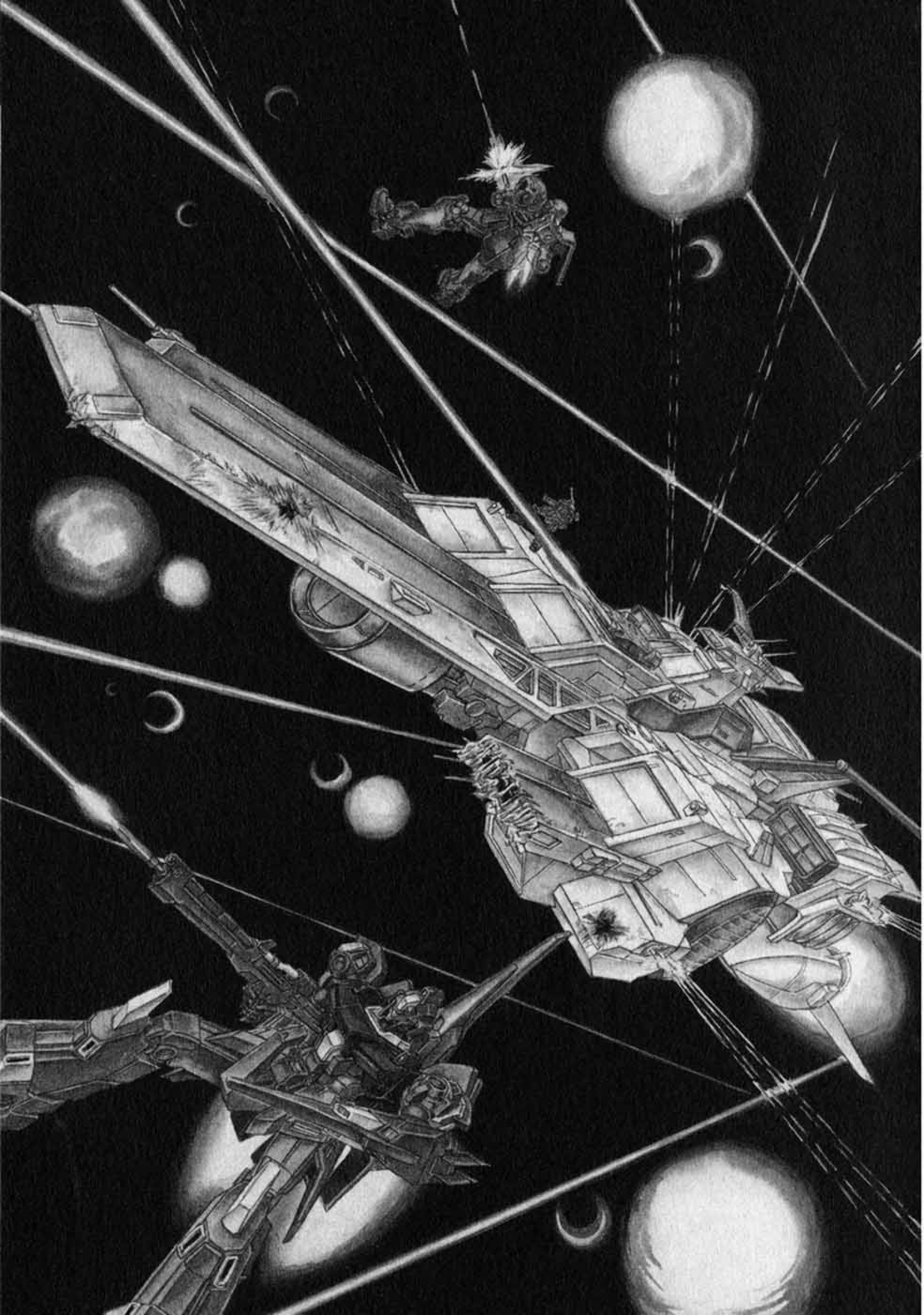
"To all escort units, with the retreat of Juliet 006 our ship's defense capabilities is reduced by 30%. Proceed in a cluster formation and focus on defending the lone ship."

"Massive numbers of enemy units incoming. Roaming target 13 "Musaka" will enter our firing range."

The sensor operator's voice overpowered Ensign Mihiro's, leaned forth from the Captain's seat, "I'll leave the evading to you. " and commanded the navigation operator at the front.

"The enemy ships are still around. They'll shoot us!"

Without waiting for the command to be repeated, he stared at the 3 markers lit on the main screen. The fleet formed by two Musaka-class ships and one disguised trading ship had set up a triangular formation in front of them, and it seemed they were still mobile given their movements. Since it was the only fleet the " Unicorn" spared when it moved forward, there was no doubt that it still had its firepower intact, and was definitely an opponent the "Nahel Argama" could not handle alone.



It had been more than 2 hours since the battle started, and though they had entered the Shoal Space Region, the number of mobile suits breaking through the anti-air perimeter had increased drastically, and the escorting units they had were unable to deal with them. It was not simply because the floating space debris obstructed them, but also because the 'iron wall' that was always in front of the "Nahel Argama" had disappeared—a fact Liam, Mineva, who was seated at the commander's seat, and all that were present in the bridge realized. *We overrelied on him, and now we have to pay the price for it?* Otto gritted his teeth as he watched the enemy markers continue to close in on them. "I heard the " Unicorn" stopped moving?" upon hearing this line, he turned behind.

A normal suit with an Anaheim logo on the chest floated into the bridge, with the person inside panting hard. Otto saw Aaron's face within the helmet, and recalled that he was the one who called the latter in. "That was 5 minutes ago", he tapped at the console on the armrest, operating it.

"Since it's from the optical sensor, we don't know the details. The lase communication's cut off."

There was a grainy telescopic visual in a corner of the main screen. It was tough to determine, but it was the CG corrected visual of the "Unicorn", which had yet to move since a while back. It was dodging the beams that were coming in from all directions, but the way it continued to roll about at the same place resembled that of a bug caught in an invisible fly trap. The 'iron wall'—the RX-0 which had practically neutralized the Neo Zeon fleet

single-handedly, was isolated in a space thousands of kilometers away, caught in some strange phenomenon. “This is…” Aaron stood at the side of the Captain’s seat, muttering, and the light from the explosions passed through the window, lighting his pale face.

“I heard the NT-D has an activation time limit. If that’s the reason for the stoppage, there’s a need to call Banagher back in.”

Mineva’s helmet too was lit by the same light as she spoke with a hushed voice. One could tell, without looking at her trembling state, that she wanted to scream out too. Aaron kept his eyes fixated on the visuals, “This may be one of the reasons.” and cautiously answered,

“But Banagher has completely mastered the “Unicorn”, and furthermore, the data shows that there’s a way to adjust the burden on the body and extend the time limit. It’s really too weird that he’s unable to move to this extent at all. It practically seems that the Psycommu was jacked.”

“Psycommu Jack?

Mineva responded to this line she never heard of before Otto could ask. “It’s different from radio waves, but psycowaves are still a form of wave.” Aaron finally looked away from and explained as he turned around.

“To jam the waves, you just need to negate it with a stronger wave. The Unicorn-types are equipped with this function.”

"Neo Zeon has such a weapon?"

"It'll take the full psycoframe's large amount of calculation ability to control and manipulate them, but if it's just jacking it—"

Another shock was large enough to rock the ship, hushing the words he was about to say next. The ship accelerated due to it, and caused all the personnel to be pressed onto the linear seats. Otto grabbed Aaron's arm as the latter was nearly thrown to the aft, and endured the pressure coming from the front. "A direct hit! It's Juliet 006!" Liam's voice caused him to shiver.

(Landing deck is breached! Hurry with the partition wall!)

"The "Kshatriya" is passed through! 4 incoming enemy units from down below!"

"We lost contact with Juliet 006. Lieutenant Mako…!"

(They'll attack us! ECOAS "Lotos", proceed to the bottom of the ship ASAP!)

(The 3rd rear cannon seems to be caught in the explosion from Juliet 006. It's wrecked!)

The voices coming through the wireless communicator overlapped with the voices of the people on the bridge, and the annoying alarms added to the chaotic atmosphere. The "Stark Egan" on the landing deck was shot down, exploded, and affected the aft area of the "Nahel Argama". Otto checked the external surveillance monitors, with one third of them taken offline, saw

the pillaged landing deck melted away, and hollered, "The cannon operator should be headed to the 3rd main cannon! Tell him to respond!" As there was a problem with the repairing of the power connector, the cannon operator had left for the bridge 10 minutes ago. As he heard the casualty reports coming in from everywhere, Mihiro's feeble voice answered him, "No response. He probably was caught in the explosion…" Though he had anticipated it, Otto felt his mind go blank.

Otto's stare was drawn to the empty cannon operator's seat, and he was unable to move. "Captain…!" Liam seemed to be hissing at him, but he was no longer in the mood to respond. They had to intercept the enemy units and carry out emergency repairs to the damaged areas. He had so many things to affirm, but he was unable to say anything. The emptiness in his mind gradually spread, and his thoughts were slowly devoured by it. *How many have died?* He muttered emptily within, *I dragged so many of our crew into this battle we had no chance of winning, a non-standard military operation to boot. How many of them were killed by this useless Captain —*

"Is this the end?"

The voice inadvertently leaked out, causing Liam's face to cringe, and Mineva and Aaron to gasp. It was not simply a matter of losing that 'iron wall'; the collective consciousness that bonded together because of the "Unicorn" existence was no longer around, and the feeling of isolation gave rise to a disoriented sense. Otto averted the uneasy stares from everyone, looked at the main monitor, and stared at the enemy fleet markers that were about to enter their line of fire. The enemy ships was lined in a triangular

formation, with ample spaces between them ostensibly wary of the hyper mega-particle cannon. The "Nahel Argama" did not have enough firepower to aim at all 3 ships, and obviously, even if they had a lucky hit, they would take the hit from the gathered firepower of the remaining two.

We'll send a retreat signal to call back the "Unicorn", and leave the current space region we're in. But the only way we can do that is when the enemy's not firing on us. Otto glanced back at Liam, who had been staring at him, closed his eyes for a short moment, and clenched his fists on his knees tightly. *Retreat*, right when this line was about to gather at his mouth, he widened his eyes, "For the time being!" a voice rang behind him.

"Rotate the ship 270, and proceed further in that manner. When they enter our firing path, fire all cannons and shoot down the center command ship."

The hulking body dressed in a normal suit continued as he advanced to the middle of the bridge. Otto widened his eyes as he saw the man behind the gun muzzle the previous night, " Zinnerman…" Otto heard Mineva mutter, and saw Liam get up with a face full of killing intent. "You want us to face the enemy by the side?" he asked, and Zinnerman nodded,

"This explosion just now will cause the enemy to think we have a large breach. As long as we pretend to be drifting, the enemy will gather in a cluster formation and fire at us in one go, rather than come attack us."

"Your proof? The enemy's wary of the hyper mega-particle cannon. They've been fighting in a spread formation."

"The Tennyson fleet emphasizes most on reacting according to the situation. They have the notion that their commander will hammer their heads if they lose an opportunity. Once we show a weakness, they'll react instinctively, especially since this place is the Shoal Space Region, practically their backyard."

This was a common theme amongst a fleet with strong command. Otto stared closely at the man, who hid inside the detention room after the commotion the previous night. "But the " Unicorn" still can't move." Upon hearing this, Otto turned back and stared at Aaron, who interrupted calmly,

"The psycommu jamming weapon is preventing the "Unicorn" from transforming into the "Unicorn". Without the "Unicorn" around, even if we go on like this—"

"It's fine. That brat will hang on."

"But…!"

"Doesn't the "Unicorn" have a system to identify a Newtype? Do you think a real Newtype will lose its power because of some radio waves jamming?"

Aaron and Otto were both taken aback by this unexpected logic. "That's…" while Aaron was at a loss of words, Zinnerman looked away from him and turned to the window, where the beams

flashed outside. “I don’t know the theory behind the machinery, but I know that guy.” He stated with firm emphasis in his tone,

“He hung on up till this point, and now we can only trust in him. Just a little more, and we can break through…!”

Trust is just like a gamble. Otto continued to stare at Zinnerman, who looked completely different from the man who said those words back then, and seemed ostensibly realized why the latter came to this place. He stared at the white machine on the telescopic visual, still trapped in the intangible net. (I feel the same too, Captain.) This voice rang from the wireless communicator.

(I heard the basis of the Laplace Program is beyond the unknown. A real Newtype will exceed the values. I guess it distinguishes between natural and artificial Newtypes through the ‘waves’ it can’t identify, and not the rigid forms of psycowaves.)

It was Gael, and Otto, who was unable to understand at least half of what he said, turned to Aaron, “Beyond the unknown.” who muttered as he looked far away. (I don’t know the basis behind the machine either.) Gael’s voice rang again.

(But let us believe! Let us believe in the possibilities the “ Unicorn” shows. If we retreat now, we’ll lose some important things. Not just the Laplace Box, but also other—”

A giant flash appeared outside the window, and a stormy shockwave shook the ship. The hull rattled, echoing with the noise from the radiowaves, preventing the rest of the words from being heard. However, there was no need to listen anymore. Otto’s blank

mind regained several pieces as he stared at everyone's faces, lit by the explosion. He saw the faces of Zinnerman, Mineva, Liam, Aaron, Mineva and all the senior duty staff—they all had nothing protecting them from behind other than the term 'trust'. They were simply driven by a reckless impulse, devoid of any thoughts about the consequences. *What will happened if we retreat now? There's billion of people in the Earth Celestial Sphere, and I'm the one chosen to lead these 400 plus people in front of me to the frontlines. If I choose to retreat at this moment, who am I going to beg for help?*

"Deep 010 downwards, 080 portside. Continue navigating through inertial flight. Wait for the enemy to cluster, and first fire at the roaming target 12 "Musaka."

This may be my last order as Captain. Otto had this passing thought in a corner of his mind as he finished these words,

"Then, aim at 14 and 15. Keep your eyes on the enemy ships' movements. We only have one chance."

Everyone nodded and faced their consoles, repeating and relaying the instructions. Otto felt the ship veer greatly as he turned to Zinnerman. The latter's eyes met his, and his bearded face turned to Mihiro as he gave the instructions, "Send a light signal to the "Kshatriya". Turn back immediately and maintain a distance of 15km away from the ship." Mihiro nearly reacted to his Captain-like tone for an instant, and then turned to Otto in surprise.

"If we bring back all our units, the enemy will think that we took heavy damage. Is that enough?" He explained with an

unnatural sounding voice, showing how sensitive he really was. Mihiro looked to and fro between a nodding Otto and Zinnerman, and protested, “But we don’t know if the light signal will reach in this situation…” Her sensitiveness was the reason why she would have such a reaction, for she could not bring herself to forgive the man who was a traitor half a day ago. “Marida will understand.” Zinnerman immediately answered, and he again turned to look at Mihiro, deliberately bringing his chin back in.

“Please, Ensign Mihiro.”

This overly curt voice caused Mihiro to gasp, and turn back to the console. Otto watched her from behind as she started to send the light signal, and felt that Zinnerman could be kept here. “ Captain Zinnerman, please sit at the cannon operator’s seat.” he said, and turned back to the main screen. “Thanks.” As Zinnerman spoke with a voice only Otto could hear, the latter glanced at him from the corner of his eyes, and then stared at the enemy ship markers that continued to close in. There was still no sign of these three ships gathering in a clustered formation as they remained in a wide triangular formation. Flashes of beams passed by on the telescopic visual insert beside the markers, showing a silhouette of the “Unicorn” on the defensive.

It’s still moving slowly. Are we being tested now? Otto muttered to himself as he watched the enemy ships movements, suppressing the uneasiness within him. As the shots from friendly and enemy mobile suits flew by, the “Nahel Argama” glided through space with its side facing the enemy ships, gradually approaching the firing range of their main cannons.

Part 3

The escort unit with spiked shoulder armors swung its beam hook diagonally downwards. While holding the beam saber with a reverse grip, Nigel parried the hook away, and with the recoil, flew backwards and tossed the last grenade left on the belt rack.

The exploded grenade expanded into a fireball spreading several kilometers wide, and the "Geara Zulu", which managed to dodge at the last moment, was dyed orange. Nigel watch the escort team unit escape in the direction he had predicted, "Daryl!" He shouted into the wireless, "Roger that!" and with this response, Daryl's "Jesta" immediately fired its beam rifle, causing the "Geara Zulu" to brake immediately as its path was obstructed by the beam . The enemy unit flailed its limbs, trying to stop and turn around using its AMBAC, but Watts' "Jesta Cannon" got behind it at that instant.

(Got you!)

The beam cannons and Gatling guns on its shoulders let out flares, and the mega-particles rained upon the "Geara Zulu", tearing it to shreds. The lower body left in space became a fireball, and Nigel tried finding the remaining unit through its beam shot. The thruster flare glided between the gaps of the floating rocks, revealing the location of the other escort units. He aimed his beam rifle over there, and at that moment, the beams crossed each other, exploding in front of Nigel's line of fire, followed by the "Unicorn" moving in between the two sides.

"What's that guy doing!?"

Nigel lashed out as he pulled the control stick. The “Unicorn” passed by his feet as it continued to be toyed by the purple mobile suit’s all range attacks, only evading. His movements were overly slow, even if the system had yet to cool down. Nigel spotted the escort squad sniping from the shadows of the Shoal Space region, and stared at the “Unicorn”, whose movements were completely different from before. The Beam Gatling guns equipped on its arms were firing shots that were not suppressing anything at all, and the mini objects floating around the machine reflected light.

“Those funnel-like things…!”

There were many Psycommu devices surrounding the “Unicorn ”, and they formed an invisible cage, sealing it. Nigel followed his unconditional instinct and aimed his rifle at those objects. However, they were moving too fast, revolving as they sealed the machine, and if he was not careful, he could end up hitting the “ Unicorn”.

“Damn it…!”

They could not fire, and with the INCOMs warding them off, they could not approach. Nigel removed the scope as he left where he was. He faced off against an escort squad “Geara Zulu” flying out from the debris, and warded it off using his beam rifle. After that, he got behind the enemy unit, which had assumed that it had dodged, “F formation!” he growled into the wireless, and continued to fire suppressing shots at the “Geara Zulu”, which had its back exposed.

(Roger!) Daryl and Watts responded, firing suppressing shots from sides. The "Geara Zulu" was flanked in 3 directions as it continued to dodge and approach the purple unit. The F formation was designated using the concept of fox hunting, by using the enemy unit as a shield and lure it towards their real objective—of course, their real objective was that purple unit. Once they could approach the mother unit, they could nullify the all-range attacks of the INCOM cannons. Since they could not remove the Psycommu devices surrounding the devices, they would attack the main unit. Nigel aimed at the escaping "Geara Zulu", and spotted the purple unit on the expanded window.

—*You're in the way.*

A cold 'voice' shook his skull, and a sweeping killing intent blew from his feet. Nigel instinctively used his back to move the machine, and the storm of scattered mega particles passed by from his eyes. The "Geara Zulu" was exposed to the sweeping scorching mega particles, its humanoid limbs crushed.

"Lieutenant Angelo!?" The pilot's holler was devoured by the static, and the escort unit was blown to bits, turning into a ball of light. Nigel spotted the INCOM shots coming at the 3 retreating Jesta-types, and glared at the purple mobile suit in shock.

"You attacked your ally too…?"

—Are you a stain too?

The 3 clawed INCOM was driven by the fault 'voice', and attacked him. It ignored the main unit, which was facing off

against the "Unicorn", and dragged its cable tail, moving so precisely that it seemed to have a consciousness on its own. The claw INCOM fired a beam, passing by the top of Nigel unit's head, and the shield type unit fired its scattered mega-particles. The hail of beams were deflected by the I-field, covering the all-view monitor. *I'll be shot down in the next move,* Nigel thought in his blank hot mind, (Stop looking down on us, you damned brat!) and at the same time, he heard Watts' bark.

The beams and physical projectiles glided through space, and the INCOMs shook its cable tail timidly. The "Jesta Cannon" used this opportunity to attack, and fired all its weapons as it closed in on the purple mobile suit.

"Stop it, Watts!!"

The machine, infected by Watts' fiery emotions, let its shoulder cannons roar as it fired its remaining missiles, the beam rifle, and the combined machine gun. The missiles were shot down by the INCOMs, but the trail of shots searing by the purple mobile suit, causing Nigel to see it falter for the first time. The monoeye that did not look over at them all this while flickered, and the rumbling INCOMs raced through space like a serpent. The two INCOMs, coupled with the killing intent on the "Unicorn", lunged at the " Jesta Cannon", and the crossfire was gathered upon the unit with the enhanced armor.

The "Jesta Cannon" soon got hit, and lost the Gatling cannon on its left shoulder, but it continued to assault the purple mobile suit. (Watts!) Daryl hollered as he provided covering fire, while Nigel drew the beam saber, attempting to cut the INCOM cables, but

ended up tripping over his unit's feet. As his vision spun about, he spotted the "Jesta Cannon" turn into a large fireball, the purple mobile suit dodging the shots, and the "Unicorn" being left in the lurch. The white machine was caught in an invisible cage, its consciousness murky—

(You brat. You don't know anything about virtue! What are you fighting for!?)

The "Jesta Cannon" separated the additional armor by igniting its explosive bolts, and readied itself as it wielded a beam saber on the left, charging at the purple mobile suit as Watts growled. The thrown grenades exploded one after another, and the purple mobile suit flew out from the fireball, getting behind Watts' unit. An INCOM then got to the front, firing its mega particles, shooting off the "Jesta Cannon" right shoulder. ""Unicorn", provide support!" Nigel, upon seeing this, exclaimed, but the splintered right arm of Watts unit drifted in space as the beam rifle shots flew everyone. The thoroughly battered "Jesta Cannon" raised its beam saber on the left hand and sliced at the purple mobile suit.

—What an annoying fellow.

The goose neck-like INCOMs were driven by the furious 'voice', and attacked the "Jesta Cannon". The beam from Nigel's unit could only graze the side of the cannon, and the mega particles fired from the bottom and side turned Watts into the intersection of a crossfire.

(Am I going to die here?)

The “Jesta Cannon” had its generator ignited, creating a large ring of light in the Shoal Space. (Watts!?) Daryl screamed, but the expanding fireball engulfed it, and a shockwave spread across, depraving Nigel of the knowledge that his subordinate was killed as he was knocked several kilometers away.

The mini nova-like light, which burned and vaporized Watts’ existence, spread around. The light pushed back the purple mobile suit as it ostensibly had a will, pushed Nigel and Daryl’s units away, and rustled the 6 Psycommu devices surrounding the “ Unicorn”.

Part 4

There was a light so dazzling one could ostensibly feel the radiowaves permeate through the armor, overpowering his sights as it spread in his mind. The light caused the pressure of the psyco jammer to fade away from his body and mind, and a ‘voice’ his ears could not receive rang in his mind.

—It’s really embarrassing, to step down like this after all that big talk. I’ll leave the leader and the rest to you.

It was not Angelo. This ‘voice’ was barbaric, yet gentle, depreciating himself for living like this, and with a sense of loss gripping his chest, entered the “Unicorn”. “Who is it…?” Banagher was awakened by his own groan, and blinked his eyes. One of the PsycoJammers had a radiation plate, spinning like a petal as it glide by the front of his eyes.

At that instant, the “Unicorn” fired the Vulcan guns on its head, but it was not something done through the use of the Intention Automatic System. Perhaps that ‘voice’ that had entered the machine was controlling Banagher, causing him to squeeze the trigger on the control stick, but he did not have time to affirm. One of the Psyco Jammers was destroyed, and he sensed a hole opening in the perimeter. The notion to attack rose within him, and the “ Unicorn” received the signal as its arms spread to the side, activating the twin-barreled Beam Gatling guns on both sides.

“These things—!”

The Gatling guns bundled in a bunch on the back let out thick beams, and 6 trails of fire were scattered everywhere, hitting another 2 of the Psyco ammers. (You…!?) Angelo’s groan rang through the wireless communicator, and Banagher, who escaped from the perimeter of Psyco Jammers, followed the direction where the voice came from, and picked out the uniquely shaped “ Rozen Zulu”. That purple death god with the light of a human life within was dazzling, with nowhere to go as it stood there—!

“You aren’t seeing anything…!”

Banagher drew the beam saber and stepped on the pedal. He got right at the enemy unit’s feet before it could let its INCOMs roam and let out crossing mega-particle shots.

“You just see what you want to see and deny everything else…! ”

(What can I do? There's nothing worth seeing!)

The "Rozen Zulu" passed through the blueish-white gaseous remnant of light as it dragged its thick cables, moving from above to behind Banagher. The shots from the INCOM cannons grazed past the "Unicorn" right when it was about to turn around, and it was too late by the time Banagher realized he was in trouble. The remaining 3 Psyco Jammers surrounded the machine, and the invisible waves negated the psycowaves, engulfing Banagher.

(Humans are all stubborn. Trust will only earn betrayal.)

The neural senses linking to the machine was severed, and the dispersion of the 'presence' was sealed within the body, making it feel heavy and rigid. Banagher let out a voiceless scream, and during this time, the "Rozen Zulu" got in front of him, the INCOM cables twitching like they were touched.

(Trust will only bring about hurt.)

The clawed INCOM swirled around the "Unicorn" as the cable ensnared towards it. The shield-type INCOM fired its scattered mega particles, and Banagher used the manual controls to deploy the left and right shields.

(You're the same too. Your unselfish kindness enrages me!)

The beams were weakened due to the dispersal, but they still interfered with the I-field on the shields, causing the "Unicorn"

cockpit to be shaken violently. The shocks, seemingly filled with Angelo's hatred, hit the machine over and over again, lashing at Banagher's body and mind mercilessly.

(As long as you're around, the Captain will act weird. The Captain's an existence beyond that of humanity, that's why he's worth trusting, and you…!)

The "Unicorn" took an impact that was beyond what the I-field could hold, and was parried backwards. The "Rozen Zulu" was closing in with pressure, and as the cables tied the "Unicorn" tightly, the claw-shaped INCOM moved in front of it as it slowly rose, covering Banagher's sights.

(I won't let you take him away, I won't let you corrupt him! You 're a stain! A stain on the white bedsheet! Disappear!)

The claw grabbed the "Unicorn" head, and the 3 cannons hidden within were pressing on its face. The 3 cannons covered the sights of the all-view monitor, but right when the mega particles, looming inside the barrels, were about to be fired, Banagher sensed an icy stare from another person piercing through the cockpit.

A red machine glided through the sea of debris, just right before the claw was about to cover his sights. Banagher recalled that masked face showing a smile, and had a vision of the Red Comet giving an observing look from afar. It was not protecting, nor was it condescending; his eyes were merely watching without a trace of emotion, not responding to the emotions lavished upon him, continually showing the everchanging light and shadow.

Is this the superhuman strength of Full Frontal, the only one Angelo could trust? Banagher suddenly asked himself, and answered himself with conviction, livid that the "Sinanju" would not approach. The way he acted in a supernatural manner would only call for others to follow him. People all had their illusions about his silence, filling themselves with malaise. *Is it strange for me to be with Frontal? Because I asked him to take off his mask? Because he agreed? No , that's just to get me to join. That man views different people differently, he can show many different faces, and up till this point, nobody saw his true image. It's because there's a need to hide this that he has to put on the mask.*

Angelo understands this, and that's why he's unable to take this. He can't stand the fact that Frontal has another side other than the one he shows to Angelo himself. If he admits it, his imagery of Frontal's perfection will be crushed, and the illusions resting on him will be crushed. Right, he's not superhuman, he's a vessel, just as he said, a vessel acting according to what others hope for, reflecting the face others want to see on his face. There's no emotion, sincerity in this existence, he' s like an inorganic mirror reflecting the world. If he's acting according to his own will, that man—

A scorching impulse soared and ruptured from within him. He felt the thoughts, which happened in 0.1 seconds, seep out from his opened pores, passing through the severed neural senses, and even causing the "Unicorn" to rumble.

The full psycoframe suddenly glowed, and heat, taking the form of a flash, coruscated from his forehead. At the same time, the "Unicorn" lone horn split to the sides, and the facemask popped out, knocking aside the INCOM claws.

(What…!?)

The white armor overpowered Angelo's shaken voice as it continued to slide. The cables were nearly snapped by the expanded armor pressing against them, and the "Unicorn Gundam " used this chance to spread its limbs out, breaking free from the bondage of the INCOMs. Banagher ignored the INCOMs that were aiming at him, and stared at the "Rozen Zulu" in front of him. The light from the Psycoframe gradually changed from red to green, and then, a rainbow luminous light arose from the cockpit. The rose-inspired machine in front too released the same light, vaguely showing the cockpit hitting in the abdomen.

The psycoframes resonated, creating a psyco field. If this was triggered by human consciousness—Banagher closed his eyes and sent the current of 'presence' towards the machine. His body was covered with goosebumps as he became one with the "Unicorn Gundam", and all the senses were linked to the machine, causing him to even feel the frigid cold of vacuum. At the same time, the shield on the back was activated, taking an X-shape as its psycoframe parts were giving off a rainbow light as well.

The shield seemed able to move on its own as it glided beside the machine, blocking the beams of the INCOMs. The right arm shield too glided into space along with its joints, blocking the

beams that were firing in from other angles. The two shields were moving freely like funnels, and the I-field generator at the top deflected the blocked beams. Through the main camera, Banagher spotted the "Rozen Zulu" falter as its all-range attacks were nullified, and swung the beam saber in his hand, releasing beam particles from within.

"Look at reality! Angelo Sauper!"

The "Unicorn Gundam" broke through the scattered beams that were blocked by the shield as it began its assault. The Psycoframe got brighter, and the rainbow light engulfed the "Rozen Zulu" as Angelo's eyes could be visualized upon its monoeye, widening in trepidation.

Part 5

The "Unicorn Gundam" engulfed in a rainbow light closed in from the front. *I've never seen a glowing phenomenon like that before. What's going on? Is that its true identity—did he activate the true identity of the psycoframe?*

He could not think. *I'll be gnawed away, it's a monster.* His primal instincts were howling, "Ps-Psyco Jammers!!" and he hollered with all his might.

There were still 3 Psyco Jammer units left, and they surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam", releasing their interference waves at it. The Anti-Psycommu System would release an artificial psycowave that would overload the receivers of the psycommu devices, but they were unable to work as they were designed to. The monitor

indicated that the fake psycowaves were in disarray, forming a different waves. The Psyco Jammers were devoured by an unknown wave, negated in the process—

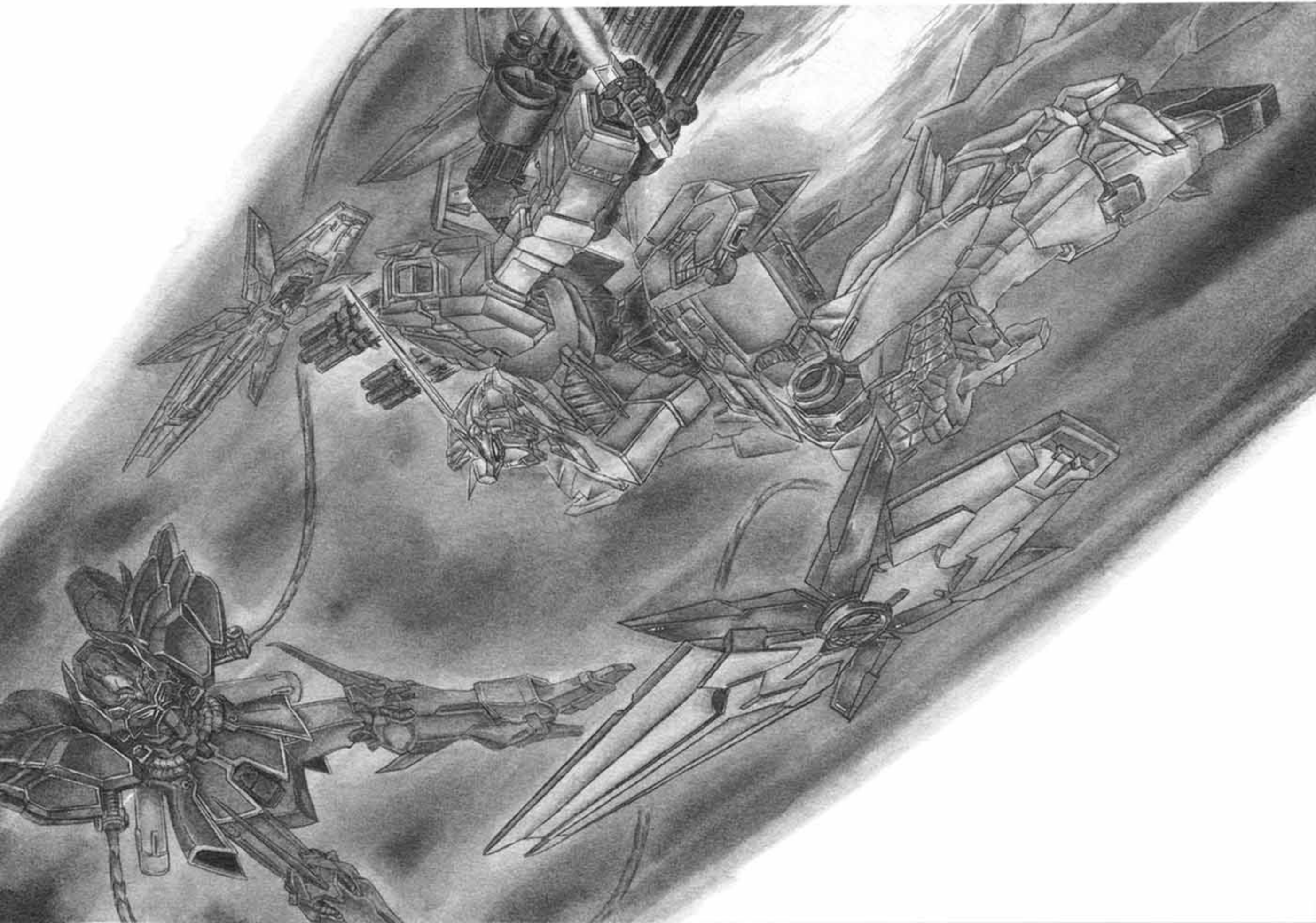
"What's this power…!? A wave that can't be digitalized…that can override the psycowaves from the Psyco Jammer!?"

(What cheap tricks are you trying! Thinking of sealing the Psycommu?)

The beam saber flashed, and the Psyco Jammer was sliced in half, becoming a ball of light. The Psyco Jammers continued to be sliced once after another, letting out explosions of light as the " Unicorn Gundam" closed in with its eyes glowing. The two shields danced about freely, surrounding the glowing machine, blocking the shots from the INCOMs one after another. Angelo leaned back onto the linear seat. He had fully checked through it before, and knew that shield was just a metal block with an I-field generator on it, that there were no thrusters on it.

"So why can an ordinary shield move around like that!?"

He tried moving the machine backwards, including to escape from the rainbow light surrounding him. At that instant, the " Unicorn Gundam" kept its beam saber on its left manipulator, and opened its palm wide at him. There was an unknown pulse created from it, causing Angelo's heart to resonate, and the "Rozen Zulu", now trapped, was unable to move at all. He saw the Psycommu monitor showing a malfunctioning sign on it, and then sensed the INCOMs aimed right at him, releasing killing intent from two directions.



"Eek…!"

He controlled the control sticks, flaring the thrusters. The INCOM cannons shots grazed by the "Rozen Zulu" as it flew away , and the scattered particles from another direction again grazed by its feet. The two INCOM let out a crossfire, intertwining the " Rozen Zulu" as it ostensibly tripped over itself. *The Psycommu got hijacked?* Angelo was driven by this impulse corroding his mind, and did not have the time to think it was possible as he continued to evade. The grazing beams scorched the "Rozen Zulu" petal-like armor, and the purple petals were wilting pitying by the weapons used against him.

—Frontal doesn't have any use for you. He's just watching.

The wave became that of a 'voice', and rang in Angelo's mind, blank with fear. He widened his eyes, and looked around.

—You never intended to see the true identity of Frontal. You're scared that the illusion shown on that mask will be destroyed.

That's why I'm angry that he removed the mask in front of that guy— the voice rang in his heart, "WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?" He hollered, and turned the machine around. Using the time where he escaped from the INCOM's attack range, he reeled the cables back in. The claws and shields were reeled back in and attached to its arms, and the "Rozen Zulu" flared its thrusters to maximum output as it leapt away.

"What do you understand anyway!?"

As long as he reeled the INCOMs back in, there was no need to fear the waves. Angelo continued to fire the mega particle cannons on the shield as he let his machine charge at the "Unicorn Gundam ".

"The Captain saved me!"

He crashed the mobile suit into a "Unicorn Gundam", which had floated in front of it, opened the claws on the left arm, and grabbed it. The 3 claws crushed the I-field generator, and the shattered shield was covered by a triggered explosion.

"He said he'll rely on me…!"

He also said that it'll be a lonely sight not to see that rose everyday. Angelo hushed the rising anxiety within him as he swung the claws at the "Unicorn Gundam".

—That's a lie. Frontal just standing on a high ground, and he won't help you, not in the past, and never in the future.

The white machine dodged with an instantaneous-like motion, and continued to give off this unnerving 'voice' that continued to wreck him. It was a sharp blade that turned his trust and love for Frontal into a curse, destroying his body. *Right, there's no compromise for excessive love. As long as our thoughts differ a little, I'll feel betrayed.* "Anything will do!" Angelo howled as he aimed the mega particle cannons on the shield at the front.

"The Captain has a destiny to be the King of the abandoned, the one who can purify this corroded world. For him, no matter what happens to my body…!"

—How pitiful you are.

The beam saber was swung vertically downwards, severing the shield attached to the right arm. The "Unicorn Gundam" then moved in a refined Japanese Iaido motion as it closed in, its eyes glowing, causing Angelo to blankly stare at its face while forgetting to check on his unit's damages. It was no longer a machine, but a person engulfed with fighting intent. The 'presence' became the light released by the Psycoframe, and the giant human was breathing in space—

"What…human is that? A giant?"

—Show the source of that twisted heart of yours.

The 'voice' of the giant, not Banagher, was ringing in his mind as its giant hand covered his sights. *I'll be crushed, I'll be gnawed, that unremovable stain will corrupt my pure world.*

"CAPTAIN!?"

Angelo shouted, but the white hot psycoframe light swallowed his body whole—

It was a white, speckless light. Angelo felt a soft fabric-like feeling from within, letting out a rustling sound.

"You really love the blanket, don't you, Angelo?"

It was the silhouette of a really large woman, smiling as her back faced the light. His face was touched by her slender and soft fingers, and Banagher knew consciously: *This is Angelo's mother.*

"Hey, mama can't do the laundry like this, you know?"

The burly arms carried Angelo as the latter hid within the blanket. From beyond the shoulders of Angelo's father, Banagher saw a pure white sea of bedsheets. It was a safety zone of warmth and cleanliness, a sanctity separated from the world, where terrifying, filthy things would never enter—

—Stop, it.

The splattered blood stained the sea of bedsheets. Angelo, who was just 3 years old, witnessed the reddish-black blemishes on that whiteness.

The butt of the rifle was slammed into papa's nose, and with one heavy hit after another, his face was completely contorted, his

body falling limp. Those burly arms were no longer of any use, and the blood flowed while the pulse throbbed, forming a new stain on the bedsheet.

"You murderer!"

Mama shouted, but the soldiers in Federation uniforms sneered as they held her down. Angelo had witnessed this scene from the gap in the cupboard. Drenched in blood was the slab of flesh that used to be papa, and the face of mama, contorted with fear.

"What human language is this Zeon swine saying!? Anti and Lippi were killed because you threw a colony on them!"

The soldiers pushed mama onto the bed. Many military boots stained with blood and dirt trampled upon the white bedsheets as they pressed on mama. He could no longer see mama's face, only her white legs protruding out from amidst the men as they took off their pants, flailing about like the hands of a clock. *She's eaten, she's being chewed on*, Angelo thought. He could not let out a voice, not because papa told him to, but that he really could not. He too was being broken down along with his mother, who was eaten, gnawed, devoured, crushed—

—Don', look.

The pure bedsheet was devoid of stains, but icy cold. Mama sat on the bed, her eyes looking cold as she stared outside the window . Angelo gave her a rose brooch on her birthday, giving her a trace of color in her transparent shadow.

Mama never saw that purple. Her body was still present, but her heart was shattered. Even after helping her put on that brooch, she never noticed Angelo.

"It has been 7 years? She's a survivor of Globe, but at that state…"

"To think the Master was willing to take her in. I heard that her deceased husband was a colleague of the Master, but she's no longer able to serve her duty as a wife in that state, right?"

"Actually, it's rumored that the Master kept his living family to gain the privileges for that job. Also, he just divorced his previous wife. You see, the Master…"

The maids' incessant chatter could be heard from a corner of the wide room. Angelo listened in as he sat at his mother's beside. His body, 10 years old, had pieced together what was once crushed, bit by bit, but it was still incomplete, for the important piece called mama was still fragmented.

Another silhouette suddenly appeared from behind, and the damp hand was placed onto Angelo's slender shoulders, causing the latter's body to jerk in shock.

"Mama's heart is still far away today. Come on, Angelo, it's time to pray. Let's pray with papa."

No, you're not papa. However, the call of denial was unable to become a voice, and his frozen body was unable to move due to fear. Angelo was ushered by the wet hand into the bedroom of the house's Master.

Over there, he too was chewed to bits that night. The unnerving tongue licked on his chest, back, butt crack, breaking his body and mind into fragments, and the heavy flesh caused his body to creak. He had been prayer every night since he was 9…a necessary ritual to let his mother live on. Of course, he resisted at first, and wanted to take his mother and run away. However, his mother would not leave that bed, and she could only live on that white bedsheet.

He had to endure the blemishes for his mother's bedsheet to remain white. He had to let this unnerving slab of flesh have a reason to keep them. Even when he was being gnawed at every day, even when his body was inserted with filthy liquid, even when he became a stain blemishing the bedsheet.

"That's right. Good boy. Our prayer will reach your mother one day."

The heavy breathing of the flesh block was upon Angelo's ears, and he saw his tears stained on the bedsheet. The corroded tears were being squeezed out of his body, together with blood and feces, becoming the stains on the bedsheet—

—Don't, come in.

It had been a long time since he had a bath, and the previous customer's stench remained on the stained bedsheet. Angelo's face was pressed on the rough fabric as he felt the saliva and sweat drip from the 'customer'.

"It's about time."

"A little longer…I heard there's quite a good one, so I deliberately came all the way from "Zum City", you know?"

"Another 20 then."

"Heheh…I'll pay."

"The 'customer' breathing got hasty. This was a middle-aged man who probably had a wife and children waiting for him once he returned home, and once he was done, he would hurriedly put on his clothes and leave this brothel, like he was terrified of being infected. *How weird,* a 16-year-old Angelo thought with his lips twisted. He used to be the one corrupted, and now he was the one corrupting others. He was being polluted while sullying others, and seemed to be maintaining his own personality as he remained stained.

His prayers never reached, and his mother jumped down from the balcony and died when the servants were not paying attention. He did not cry, for his tears were to flow when he was covered with filth, and not when he lost something. He too knew that praying never worked right from the beginning.

He did not attend the funeral, and left that mansion, wandering through the colonies of the Republic. After 3 years, he reached this street, a street filled with filthy people like him, a place with stench reeking all over the roads and neon lights. As long as his body remained, he would not have to go hungry. Even when he was gnawed into a battered, tattered body, there was no lack of visitors who would pay money for him.

There was no pain at that place; if he did not believe, he would not be betrayed; if he did not want it, he would not lose it. It was a lot more comfortable than forcing 'trust' and 'future' onto himself. When the filth had gathered to a point where it would leak out from him, he could vent all his frustrations through alcohol and drugs. On the first day he arrived, the hoodlum assigned to raise the protection fee and take care of him seemed to have joked, "The angel has fallen into the sty." *Right, there's no need to worry about being fallen. If I continue to fall, I'll merely be dumped on the roadside like a bug. At that time, a real angel will definitely come and bring me* ***up*** *.*

However…this isn't everything, Angelo thought. After being thrusted in by the desires of the 'customers', and after seeing his acquaintances being tossed onto the roadside coldly, he felt a searing heat permeate through his mind. Even if he burned the whole world down, it was not enough; the energy within him, which could vaporize his filth at any given moment, was looking for another avenue to escape. *Before I end up leaving the world, I have to vomit everything out until it is clean. I was too young when the tragedy at Globe happened. Because of mama, my burden, I never thought of venting on that disgusting slab of meat. No, even if the burden had vanished, I never chose to do it. Maybe it's because I instinctively know that it's not enough for me to vent completely. It's not worth killing someone and get my freedom taken away.*

Perhaps all I need is a trigger. And to use this energy, I need someone else to squeeze the trigger. But that's probably not going to be a person, Angelo wondered. *Humans are too weak, humans will betray each other, they'll take away, destroy, corrupt others—and cause all these*

happenings on the world. I have to raze them all, but I need something that's beyond human. God? Devil? None of it matters. All I need is an existence that an angel can follow, no matter what it is. His desire for an encounter with that existence brought a strong sense of rhapsody and blissfulness, one more potent than drugs. It was an overwhelming ecstasy for this body, which was already devoid of sexual delight and enthusiasm.

It's not that far away. He had a feeling that the object was just inches away from him. Like him, the object had an impulse to raze everything in the world to the ground. The flame of revolution, which would burn all filth away and changing a new bedsheet, was slowly approaching.

He would not mind the filth Angelo had, for he had surpassed humanity. As long as he offered his body to that man, who would never taint nor be tainted, he could return to that bed again. That cleanliness and warm white bedsheet, the sacred ground where only he, mama and papa existed, where nobody else could approach.

The ecstasy quivered within him. The delightful squeals of the ' customers', the filth from others that intruded upon him—

"YOU SAW!!?"

A voice erupted, shaking Angelo's hearing as he ostensibly fell back into his body. The dual-eyed sensors filled the all-view monitor, showing a skeptical light. (Angelo…!?) a call rang from reality.

"What did you do? WHAT DID YOU DO, YOU BASTARD!!?"

He was seen through, blemished, trodden by something that barged it. It was practically rape, just like the uncomfortable slab of flesh and the 'customers'. Angelo moved the control sticks erratically, trying to shake off the "Unicorn Gundam" pressing down on him. (Calm down, Lieutenant Angelo!) Banagher's voice rang through the contact loop.

(I know about you, and you know about me. People can understand each other; there's no reason for us to fight each other!)

Know? See? I saw you. I know you. How you inherited your father's ideals, how you lived together with your mother, how you kept changing yourself as you interact with humans, how you are entrusted with the possibility that surpasses generations.

We're too different. You're too dazzling. We can't get along. It's impossible. You saw me. It's too embarrassing. I hate this.

"GET OUT FROM MY HEART!!"

Banagher's thoughts still lingered in his heart. He, with that overly upright thinking of his, continued to give off light without further thought, proclaiming that humans can change. *You're just like your father, using your strong self as the standard, not knowing when to look back at the weak. Captain, where's the Captain that fills my darkness and calms me down—?* Angelo continued look for Frontal's mask as he continued to struggle, his mind being a mix of

confusion, hollers and angst. *I've been seen, I've been recognized. Got to kill this guy fast, got to make this guy disappear from the world before the stain spreads.*

(Angelo…!)

Banagher's voice rang through the cockpit, and the "Unicorn Gundam" held down the shaking "Rozen Zulu", showing a horrifying light. *No, I can't win, I can't shake him off, everything will be exposed under the light.* In his sub-consciousness, Angelo pressed the INCOM activation switch, and gathered his focused thoughts into the Psycommu.

"If you don't get out…!"

The remaining clawed INCOM fired its cannon, and the tail-like cables spun about in space. *This is the only way to cut off the mixture of thoughts and get rid of all the filth—right, I should have done that right from the beginning. Why didn't I think about it earlier? If that happens, I won't have to be trampled by that slab of flesh.* Angelo stared at the INCOM, spinning counterclockwise in a long arc, from beyond the shoulder of the "Unicorn Gundam".

This is good. The source of the filth that caused Frontal to fall, the stain that sullied the clean bedsheet, can be chased out now.

(Stop it, Angelo!!)

Banagher yelled, but Angelo showed a contorted smile on his sweaty, teary face.

"I, win…"

The INCOM flew in from the flank of the "Unicorn Gundam", and stabbed into the "Rozen Zulu" abdomen. There was no mistake in the aim, and the claws crushed the ball-shaped cockpit block, ostensibly biting through his armor, digging out his heart. The cracking sounds of impact seemed to be either the sound of the Psycoframe surrounding the cockpit being crushed, or the sound of his synchronized thoughts with Banagher being crushed. Either way, Angelo was thrown out from the linear seat, his body crashing into the inner wall of the dilapidated cockpit.

It felt as if his limbs were fractured as the shock pierced through his skull, expanding in his mind that was turning blank. It was not darkness, but blank white. His thoughts, which were forcefully ruptured, had been reinstated to an original blank state. *I won't be dirtied again, nobody can touch me.* The air was sucked out from the crack along the inner wall, and Angelo floated in the cockpit that was instantly filled with vacuum, staring at the Psycoframe light that was released.

The image had vanished, and the inner wall was filled with the color from the cracked monitor panel, the same bright purple color as the brooch he gave to his mother. *I see,* Angelo understood everything in his blank. *Mama too did the same thing, digging out her own soul and crushing it so that she won't be stained again—*

The "Unicorn Gundam" stood around blankly, fading away on the other side of the crack. It too faded away from his sights, and vanished in the blankness. *Serves you right. You won't be able to get me. Who wants to get on with you? Only the Captain can enter my heart.*

Captain…the mask of darkness belonging to the king of the forsaken…the Red Comet that came from the abyss of space…comet? I know what that is. I saw that on TV a long time ago. There was a large comet giving off a bright light. It seems it'll be a few years later the next time it reaches Earth. When you're at the age when you're older than papa…right, that's what mama taught me.

"Mama, papa…"

Where are they? I've to look for them. Angelo's thoughts were interrupted and devoured by the blankness as his clear eyes stared at the crack in the cockpit.

The stars were flowing, and the world had returned to nothing. There was nothing terrifying or filthy. The blankness in his mind would wash and remove everything, and in this purified, white world, he finally gets back the pure white bedsheet—

Part 6

There was still some little spark lights coming from the abdomen where the INCOM had stabbed into, and the "Rozen Zulu" had fallen silent, fading away. It would be more appropriate to call this silent item as a corpse rather than scrap metal as it glided through space, merged into the Shoal Space region and being absorbed into the darkness.

"Angelo…"

The Psyco field formed between the two machines faded away, and the absolute zero vacuum surrounded the "Unicorn Gundam"

.There was no further killing intent, and none of Angelo's numbing expression. The brightness of the Psycoframe decreased as it reverted back to its usual red color, and Banagher could only watch the "Rozen Zulu" leave reluctantly.

It was just like his experience with Marida—their thoughts had synchronized, and they could share their hearts with each other, but this time, he was refused at the last second. Angelo destroyed himself, his mind shattered like a glass art piece. Banagher too admitted to himself that this was undoubtedly a way of killing others too. There was none of Angelo's heart anymore, just a flesh with blank eyes like his mother.

Is it because I'm weak? Or is it a crime to enter other people's hearts—is that so? Then, a Newtype is—

(You destroyed him.)

A cold voice rang from above Banagher's head, and he immediately froze, clenching his tense hands.

(Such an insolent power. You have no right to forcefully enter other people's hearts.)

The red machine went from above his head to behind. As the killing intent intensified, the "Unicorn Gundam" Psycoframe again brightened. Banagher let out a small sigh and focused his consciousness at the back. The shield floating in space gave off a rainbow, and moved behind the machine like a hunting dog pricking its ears. The red machine moved slightly as its monoeye flickered.

"You were just watching from afar…!"

The "Sinanju" beam rifle fired a shot of light the moment Banagher turned around. The direct hit from the powerful beam overloaded the generator, and once the I-field was destroyed, the shield was knocked away. An incoming grenade then blew the shield apart, and the scattered Psycoframe fragments dazzled like scales. Banagher let the "Unicorn Gundam" fly through the dazzling particles, and the white giant let out a rainbow trail as it closed in on the scarlet red mobile suit.

(You're too dangerous. You're showing how a Newtype is like too carelessly.)

The beam Gatling guns let out 6 trails of beams as they fired at the same time, and the "Sinanju" evaded sideways. Banagher turned the machine around, pointing the barrels on the right hand at the enemy. However, there were no shots left. Right when his mind went blank, the "Sinanju" fired the bazooka attached to the beam rifle, and the object released a trail of gas as it closed in on the "Unicorn Gundam".

(This will bring about the disgust and oppression from the Oldtypes, and you shall be burned to nothingness.)

As the barrel was shortened, the initial velocity was a lot slower than usual—however, the bazooka shell was still moving quickly due to the thrust from the unit. The approach controls triggered the shot, and hundreds of scattered shots were released in a spread

array. Banagher increased the throttle of the “Unicorn Gundam” to the maximum, and advanced towards the “Sinanju” before the scattered shots could catch up to him.

“Aren’t you a Newtype too…!?”

(Is that so?)

Banagher threw the empty Beam Gatling guns at the enemy as he accelerated, and the 4 Gatling guns, 2 on the back and 2 on the right arms, fired upon the red machine like arrows, and the “ Sinanju” lost its balance, firing its beam rifle. It certainly was atypical of him to fire about randomly. And right when Banagher continued to advance without slowing down, *he got me,* this instinct exploded from his forehead in the form of a thin light, and he rolled the “Unicorn Gundam” to the side. The next instant, the consecutive bazooka shots grazed past the nose of the machine, and pellet bags kept exploding.

The “Unicorn Gundam” managed to avoid the direct hit, but was still caught in the maelstrom of pellets, and decelerated as a result. It was unable to adjust itself using the AMBAC, and the “ Sinanju” closed in immediately, flashing its monoeye as it aimed the bazooka barrel under the beam rifle at him. *This is the end,* the moment he thought this, another beam shot in from another direction, keeping the “Sinanju” away. The red machine gave up on shooting and exerted its thrusters to the maximum output, and let out a trail of thruster flare as it flew vertically upwards, block the 2 thruster lights coming from behind.

(“Unicorn”, are you alright?)

The IFF indicated two RGM-96X “Jestas”, attacking the “Sinanju ” from two directions, top and bottom. Their movements were very sharp, perhaps because they wanted revenge for the 3rd unit that was lost, and they were full of vigor. However, their overly powerful ‘presences’ would be dected by Frontal. Banagher predicted the movements of both sides, and saw through the trap the “Sinanju” had set. “Back down!” He yelled as he fired the Beam Magnum.

The beam that was twice the thickness of an ordinary beam stopped the “Jestas” from moving onwards. (What are you doing …!?) Banagher however ignored the pilot yelling this as he yelled, “Don’t you look anywhere else, Full Frontal!” The red machine responded, (Very well.) and left the reticule at high speeds, rising towards the head of the “Unicorn Gundam”.

「ここから先は通さん、と言っておこうか。バナージくん」
「押し通るっ!」（本文より）

(Let me say this first, Young Banagher. I won't let you pass through.)

"I'll force my way through then!"

The "Unicorn Gundam" drew its beam saber, and its main thrusters flared as it tried to get behind the "Sinanju". There were only 2 sets of Beam Magnum magazines, so he could not fire carelessly. He fired off the few remaining rounds from the Beam Gatling guns attached to the left arm as a deterrence, and then predicted how Frontal would dodge as he turned his machine sharply. The "Sinanju" flew down the path he had predicted, and right when they were about to clash, he swung the beam saber down. The "Sinanju", which had passed by, turned around before Banagher could feel any impact on the control stick, and spread its body wide at the "Unicorn Gundam".

The Psycoframe let out a resonating sound, and the "Sinanju" abdomen and joints let out a rainbow glow. The rear unit resembling a wing was spread out, and the moveable thrusters sticking to the shins were pushed out from the supporting frame. The machine seemed to have transformed into a hi-mobility state as it released a glowing rainbow light, and Banagher instinctively retreated the "Unicorn Gundam". The glowing lights clashed and fused between the two machines as they pulled away from each other, and the light from the Psyco field expanded in an explosive manner.

The ripple-shaped light shook the surrounding space debris, and ejected the two "Jestas". Banagher felt apologetic to them, but

there was no way an ordinary machine could take part in this battle. Once the excessive objects were removed, the field created by the two psyco machines was filled with the duo's killing intent, and with abated breath, Banagher held his beam saber again. The " Sinanju" too raised the shield suspended on the left hand, and activated the twin-sided beam axes equipped on the back.

The axes, fixed on the shield, spun around, and a pair of beam blades burst out from the tip of the shield. The terrifyingly large beam blades, with the shield as the hilt, resembled that of an abnormally large crab. The "Sinanju" swung the beams that was taller than the machine itself, and crouched forward as it released the thruster flares on its back. The "Unicorn Gundam" too lit its main thrusters. The beams kept attacking, the beam blades clashed intensively as the two machines crossed each other, letting out sparks.

This is the only guy I can't lose to. The "Unicorn Gundam" was driven by this instinct as it swung its beam saber down. The " Sinanju" tonfa swung up at the same time, and the clashing beams caused the psyco field light to quiver.

Part 7

The 2nd main cannon equipped at the belly of the ship let out a trail of mega-particles after the 1st main cannon on the bow was fired. The arrows of beams released from the "Nahel Argama" carved out pink trails, and weak lights of explosions appeared on the other end of space.

It was the light of a direct hit—*is something shot down?* Marida felt a killing intent vanish as she immediately gathered her concentration on the enemy ship at her left.

The "Nahel Argama" had disguised itself as a ship unable to steer, and lured the enemy ships to gather in a clustered formation. Once it got into firing range, it immediately removed its disguise, and the enemy was gathered in the same firing area as planned. After the command ship in the center was shot down, the enemy ship on the right became the new target. Marida felt the mothership turn its cannons as according to plan from the back, and gathered her consciousness on the enemy ship several hundred kilometers to the left. It was too distant, and as Marida's sights were blurry due to excessive fatigue, she did not know if she could reach there in time.

"Funnels!"

She endured the pain surging from her flank as she focused on controlling the funnels in her field of perception. The funnels—small automatic cannon pods, had dwindled in numbers to 7, and after being on standby near the enemy ship, they lit their thrusters and surrounded the last Musaka-class. There was only one chance. If she failed, the enemy would have a chance to counterattack, and the "Nahel Argama" would be attacked. Marida focused on the funnels that would escape her field, and glared at the Musaka-class, which was faltering after the command ship was shot down. She felt pain in her temples, her perception field was blurry, and her impression of the enemy ship was becoming vague.

"Hit them…!"

She held onto the ball-shaped control tightly, and eked out a voice from her gritted teeth. The 7 funnels released beams in unison from the tip of the cylinders, and Marida saw the engines of the Musaka-class being shot through from all directions. The explosion from within knocked the rear main cannon upwards, and the debris flying away due to the shockwave hit the funnels. Her perception field was engulfed by the incandescent light, and her consciousness was forced back into her body as she could spot a small flicker of light from far away.

Marida's strength seeped from her inadvertently straightened body, and she lowered her face. As she panted hard, her shoulders moving up and down, "Marker 15 "Musaka" is now silent." The sensor operator's voice rang from the wireless, and she turned the "Kshatriya" monoeye to the back.

(Marker 14 has a large breach. It seems they're retreating.)

(Turn the ship back and revert back to the original planned path . The mobile suit squadrons are not to relax. There are still enemies around.)

Captain Otto's voice rang. Marida directed the funnels back to her in a corner of her mind as she expanded the visual of the " Nahel Argama", located, 10,000km behind her, on the expanded window. The ship, which had already lost its portside catapult deck for a long time, had burn marks all over its white armor, and

the right side of the wing-like solar panels was snapped. One of the "Loto" assigned to the ship had ran out of ammunition, and Kwani's severely damaged "Geara Zulu" was kept in the ship. Including the "Stark Jegan" that was shot down, one could say that they lost quite a lot of forces. In this current situation, the only units they could activate were a "ReZEL", a "Loto", and Evan's " Geara Zulu". They lost 50% of their fighting strength defending a single ship for more than 2 hours.

However, the damage they dealt to the enemy was definitely no less than 50%. Most of Tennyson's fleet was drifting around due to the loss in control over the steering, and there was nothing that could prevent them from moving forward towards "Industrial 7". *The "Unicorn Gundam", Banagher, how are they now?* She opened her visor and wiped the sweat off her face, resting the back of her head on the headrest hidden in the Psycommu. As she endured the pulsating pain in her temples and intended to respond to Banagher 's thoughts, (Marida) a voice caused her eyes to widen.

(Good work. Return to the mothership first. We can't replenish the funnels for now, but at least we can do some emergency repairs.)

It was Zinnerman. *Master,* she swallowed the words she nearly let out, "But the "Unicorn"…" Marida responded. She wondered when he entered the bridge, (That guy's going to be fine.) but the familiar voice echoed, easing the pain in her temples slightly.

(He was caught in some strange weapon, but it seems he broke through it. He's now fighting against an enemy unit.)

"An enemy unit…?"

(There doesn't seem to be any other enemy unit from what we can see here. The "Nahel Argama" will immediately catch up. Return to the ship to rest. You're still not in the best of conditions now, right?)

His empathy of her emotional toils were conveyed to her in a deliberate aloof tone meant to hide his embarrassment. His voice sounded no different from usual, but this was not the voice of someone who would remain amidst the darkness. She understood that Zinnerman had taken this step too, but at the same time, felt something was amiss with the one enemy unit, and looked towards the direction Banagher was at. There was still more than 1,000km till "Industrial 7", and there was still an enemy standing in the "Unicorn Gundam" path, taking it on alone.

A chime rang as a flash appeared, causing the skin under the pilot suit to be covered in goosebumps. This light was intense yet cold, and dissipated the heat Zinnerman's voice had brought as the stare from the mask caused her chest to freeze—

"It's him…?"

There was no time for hesitation. Amongst the battle up till this point, she still had yet to sense any pressure from that man. That man waited for the "Unicorn Gundam" to brea through the fleet, and conserved his strength instead of taking part in the battles. Marida sealed her visor and again grabbed onto the ball control. "I 'll make a move first." Upon hearing her voice, "Marida…!" Zinnerman yelled.

"The "Unicorn" is fighting Full Frontal. That's not an enemy Banagher can win on his own."

(We'll send another unit over. You're already at your limits. Come back.)

"I'm going."

(Marida! Are you not going to listen to my orders?)

"I've already received your final command."

Follow your heart. (Marida…) The groan finished as Zinnerman was left speechless. Marida sensed his stare coming from 10km behind, and stepped on the pedal. The "Kshatriya" opened its binders and started to accelerate, fading away quickly on the expanded window of the "Nahel Argama". She also felt Zinnerman's stare become distant, and her body started to cool, but the feeling of being supported from behind by someone did not decrease in the slightest. She was driven by a strength more poignantly detected than before as the massive body of the " Kshatriya" advanced amidst the sea of debris.

Since I'm being supported, I too have to support others equally. Marida called back the funnels, now reduced to 6, back in, and hurriedly moved forward. The place she yearned to head to let out a flash, leaving an afterimage in her eyes. *Fire and ice is clashing*, she mumbled these words that subconsciously surfaced in her thoughts as she drove the "Kshatriya" to where the light was.

Part 8

The shield with the Zeon insignia engraved on it swung down, and the high-output particles released from the tips grazed past the body. The beams hide the rock debris passing by behind, causing the icy cold rocks to be scorched instantly.

The melted gravel cackled and exploded, and the 30m wide rock was shattered into fragments. The scattered fragments hit the machine, causing Banagher to be a step slower in getting behind the enemy unit. The “Sinanju”, which had crushed the rock, immediately swung its shield and continued to slash at the “ Unicorn Gundam” multiple times.

“Tch…!”

(Newtypes. That’s a one-off power created out of youth.)

Frontal’s voice rang as the 2 beam blades immediately closed in. The “Unicorn Gundam” managed to dodge in the nick of time, but the grenade launcher hidden behind the shield let out a flare, releasing a grenade the size of a drum barrel that exploded beside the “Unicorn Gundam”.

(It will not continue forever, and there’s no power to topple the situation. It is merely—)

The beam blades resembling that of large pliers swung down, and the savage blades were ostensibly the instantiation of if Frontal’s thoughts—

(The vibrancy of youth!)

The “Unicorn Gundam” had bent its upper body to the limit, and the yellow beams grazed past it as it sliced the space. Banagher used the backflip momentum of the machine to kick hard at the abdomen of the “Sinanju” while falling back.

“Don’t force the despair of a middle-aged man on me. I can’t stand it!”

The red machine took a hard uppercut kick at the abdomen, was sent flying, and staggered about. (Is that so…?) Frontal groaned, and the beam rifle in the right hand let out a flash. The “ Unicorn Gundam”, which had lit its thrusters to back away just a moment ago, was scorched on the surface by the beam. A bazooka shot was fired along with the rifle shot, releasing a gaseous trail as it was fired along the same axis. Banagher did not have the time to aim as he fired the Beam Magnum.

The empty E-pack was ejected, and the thick beam, which used up all the energy from it, vaporized the bazooka. The “Sinanju” used the light of explosion as a cover to retreat to the void filled with clustered debris. The intermittent flashing lights of the thruster jets were hidden amidst the meteorites, and the motion sensors were unable to catch up. However, Banagher knew that he did not have to worry about losing the target, for the light released from the Psycoframe was brighter than that of the thruster flares, etched in his eyes. The rainbow light released from the “Sinanju” machine from time to time would reveal its location.

“You should understand that this light is released from our hearts. The Psycoframes reflect our hearts.”

He was not a vessel. That man too had a heart that could interfere with others. The beam rifle had 7 shots left, the spare magazines included, and Banagher readied it at a position to fire as he too entered the clustered zone of debris.

"Both Newtypes and Oldtypes can resonate and understand each other. If we gather this light, we can even send the colonies out of the Milky Way. Humans have such a possibility—"

(And some have collapsed upon touching this possibility.)

The voice interrupting him rang from behind, and the red machine appeared from the shadow of the debris. Angelo's face appeared in Banagher's mind, causing the latter to react a fraction of a second late.

"Possibilities are chaotic. They take up an irregular form, and easily leads us to destruction. We can't leave it alone.)

The two beam axes forming a shielded plier were attached, and the "Sinanju" swung its beam blades, assuming the form of a Naginata, slicing the debris apart. The beam rifle was kept at the waist, so there probably would not be any incoming flying projectile. Banagher immediately saw through this ruse, and wanted to pull his distance, but was shocked to see the shield raised. The bazooka launcher, which was hidden under the rifle just a while back, was moved behind it.

A flash appeared at the tip of the cannon, and a bazooka shot was fired. Banagher could not dodge in time, and hurriedly let the "Unicorn Gundam" charge right towards it. The G-force struck

from behind, ostensibly popping the eyeballs out, and the overlaying G-force from the front caused the air sacs of the pilot suit to expand.

"The human heart can guide it to goodness, right!?"

Banagher eked out these words from his crushed lungs as he drew the beam saber. The bazooka shot, which had been advancing in a straight line, passed by the feet without being able to activate the approach sensor, and the "Sinanju", looking a little hesitant, was right in front of his eyes. Banagher got into its clutches and swung the beam saber diagonally upwards.

The pink beams severed the cannon barrel poking from the shield. However, the "Sinanju" then did something beyond Banagher's expectation; it detached the disabled bazooka launcher and fired the Vulcan cannons on the head at it. The projectile left inside was ignited, and the flash of explosion covered Banagher's sights.

(The human heart is an enigma, and can't be controlled. That includes our wn.)

The "Sinanju" flew through this light and closed in on the " Unicorn Gundam". The Naginata and beam saber clashed, causing sparks to flash vibrantly around the two machines.

(Excessive hope will become a poison. As you said, Spacenoids aren't any different from Earthnoids. There's only those

subjugating, and those being subjugated. The positions change from time to time, but human history lingers in this ever constant blueprint.)

The Psycoframe equipped on the "Sinanju" joints glowed, and the ball-shaped cockpit block in its abdomen vaguely appeared. Banagher had a vision of the mask, glowing in the rainbow light.

(While it is still a good thing for an occasional revolution to prompt a change in positions, it is too dangerous a notion to turn all humans into something beyond humanity. You have already attained a God-like power by being united with that machine; for that, I can't allow you to reach that "Laplace Box".)

"I'm human! Just like you! Just an ordinary human born from the interaction between humanity and the world!"

Banagher repelled the icy voice seeping into his pores as he roared back, turning around to block the beam saber. The beam blades were knocked aside, pushing the two machines apart. The " Sinanju" hurriedly backtracked.

"There's nothing that won't change. Myself, the world, we all will change according to our hearts. The history you talk about is just the thing you see!"

(But some are uneasy about that uncertainty. Those Oldtypes never sought after the truth, ust an answer that's easy to understand.)

The “Sinanju” broke the Naginata into two axes, and accelerated from near Banagher’s feet. It rolled to the side to dodge the Beam Magnum shot, and swung the superheated axe blade at the machine that was on the same height, and Banagher managed to swallow back the cry he nearly released.

(It is a mistake to think that everyone can be on the same level as you, and imposing it on others is an act of arrogance. Just show the results of it to them. You can already destroy someone just by touching them; there is no way you can remain with ‘everyone’.)

“Such nonsensical logic…!”

Banagher kept the beam rifle in the mount on the back, and drew the beam saber on the shoulder with his emptied right hand. Two beam sabers took the strikes from the two beam axes, and the clashing beams let out continual sparks. Perhaps Frontal too had the fear of being burned by his reflexes. After slashing at each other for several seconds, the two machines pulled away from each other at the same time; the “Sinanju” recovered a little faster, and got behind the “Unicorn Gundam”.

(To continue to plead change with those that do not want to, or to get an unchanging outcome? I chose the latter, and became a vessel.)

The “Sinanju” connected the hilts of its beam axes together, and again attacked with the Naginata. Banagher turned around, swung the beam saber, and managed to catch the Naginata blade in time.

(A vessel simply needs a will in it, calling for the collective consciousness of the Spacenoids. There's no need for any possibility, just an accepted outcome.)

"How can humans become vessels!? That's just your cry from despair…!"

The other beam saber immediately swung over, and the crossing beams parried the Naginata aside. The "Sinanju" was knocked back by the interfering lights that exploded, and gave an opening. *Chance,* Banagher tossed aside all other thoughts as he let the "Unicorn Gundam" leap over.

"What caused you to be like this? What's your source of despair !?"

The right manipulator kept the beam saber and reached its hand forward. Banagher did not think too much as the "Unicorn Gundam" psycoframe increased in brightness, while the opened fingers released a wave. The invisible 'wave' engulfed the phosphorus rainbow light, and seemed to surround the "Sinanju".

The "Sinanju" joints were stiff, and remained still as it was seemingly restrained. *I'm not going to kill anyone again. I'm going to pull out the vengeful thoughts in you.* Banagher reached his hand out, and the "Unicorn Gundam" too moved its right arm along with him and grabbed the "Sinanju" head.

"Remove your mask! Full Frontal…!"

The Psycoframes lights continued to clash, intertwine and fuse together. It was the same feeling as that with Marida and Angelo. Their thoughts resonated, forming a different thought process—but before Banagher's consciousness could drift from his physical body, he saw Frontal's lips curl into a smirk. The smiling smirks became a vortex that slowly spun about, pulling in Banagher's consciousness—

The light disappeared.

Nothing.

Emptiness.

There was nothing in this void.

There was no light, no darkness, just an existence filled with nothing. There was nothing to resonate, to interact about. Is this the inside of the man who deemed himself to be a vessel—?

Impossible, there has to be something. A source that cause this man to be twisted into despair; a memory that can be a nursery for vengeance. Banagher floated in this emptiness, where all sense of direction was null, and his presence uncertain, seeking Frontal's thoughts. However, there was a darkness surging from nowhere, ostensibly responding to his determined thoughts in assuming that there had to be something, and recognized the dark space with billions of stars in it.

Infinity, this is the only existence that could describe the term clearly. It was impossible to gauge such a scale using human

strength. Even a small step within the Milky Way could take millions of years. The daily common sense, having been often locked within a cabinet, accompanied a sense of realism, surging towards Banagher, causing him to feel a suffocating terror.

Suffocating in an infinite space? Such nonsensical words. However, humans as individuals only had a activity time of less than 100 years, and definitely wo;; not be able to leave the Solar System even till death, let alone the Milky Way. The Celestial Sphere between Earth and the Moon will at most be expanded to Mars or Jupiter—and this is merely an absolutely tiny space in comparison to outer space, yet they cannot take a single step out of it. They are restricted by the constraints of the physical bodies, bounded by the concept of Relativity they discovered, and their lives end without them being able to look into the abyss of space. They can only reach their hands towards where they could reach, and once every remaining planet is devoured and destroyed, even their existence as a species will undoubtedly come to an end. Perhaps, in the face of infinity, humanity can only suffocate.

Can they fly out of this Solar System if they gathered the light in the Psyco field? If they were real Newtypes, can they really show that there is an existence beyond that of the light? This abyss however will be swallowed whole together with that possibility. No matter where they flew, there is an endless darkness with nothing around, and they will quiver in fear before they could fly. There was nothing in this space, just infinity, and no other highly-sentient lifeform they could meet. Even if there is, they ismerely be the remnant of a civilization that was long extinct, or a budding lifeform that would be discovered in the future. In terms of the depths of space, the lifespan of a species, from birth to

extinction, will merely be just an instant. There had never been a miracle in this space where a moment can be met with another.

Humanity is just one of those instances—just a fleeting instance created in eternity. The meaning of existences, or what used to be the meaning, will be born and gone before they can reach anyone else. Possibilities are merely possibilities, a temporarl comfort amidst the loneliness of millions of years. Even now, they continue to progress slowly towards their end, giving off heat in this void.

It was cold. He could feel the heat being robbed from his body, his existence being devoured from nothingness. It was futile, no matter what he did, Audrey's warmth, his father's wish, his mother's ideals, they were all just a fleeting illusion amongst the billions of them. There was already a decided ending, and no matter what he did—

—Only humanity has God.

A 'voice' floated in the emptiness, where he was the only one present. The thoughts residing in his inner heart caused a 'voice' to be released from something formed by his existence.

—The inner god called possibilities.

The 'voice' became a light. Right, the original creator had once said, 'let there be light'. Words will create light, and thoughts would recognize phenomena. The intellectual presences are the only ones who can recognize this blankly existing space as the world. Humanity will bring meaning to the universe's existence, through their power and gentleness.

—Don't look at the emptiness. It won't respond to you, and will swallow you.

The light gradually got bigger, and the warm wave swept aside the frozen nothingness. The 'voice' he recognized, Marida's thoughts, were supporting his existence from within. He reached his hand out for the light.

—Don't be swallowed by him. You're human, unlike us created beings. Take back your own words.

The dazzling light took the form of a human, and Banagher held her hand. *That's how it is,* the warmth of skin came from the palm. *Keep saying it no matter what happens,* the only line she ever taught Banagher was born in his heart, expanding throughout the entire void. Even if the future would be shattered, even if we're just existences born from nothingness, and will return back to nothingness—

"EVEN SO…!"

The shout became a power released from the "Unicorn Gundam " arm. The belt of light from the Psyco field exploded, and Banagher witnessed the "Sinanju" being knocked aside.

(This power…?)

Frontal's voice rang through the fluttering light for the first time . Banagher returned back to reality, shook his head, and looked

around at the rainbow light surrounding the machine. The " Unicorn Gundam" was not the only one releasing light, and it was not a light formed with the "Sinanju". It was a light formed by the resonating of a nearby existence, dragging him back from the emptiness.

The "Sinanju", having been knocked knocked, used its AMBAC to balance itself, and drew the beam rifle on its waist with its left hand. Banagher's thoughts had yet to catch up with the developments as he looked back at the barrel without defending himself. In an instant however, several funnels ripped through the light in the Psyco field, crossing in his sights.

(Your opponent is me!)

The screaming voice rang through the wireless radio, and the funnels fired in unison. The "Sinanju" retreated as it swung its beam Naginata, blocking away the crashing beams at the last moment. Two shots then came in, and once the retreating "Sinanju " retreated from his sights, the massive body of the "Kshatriya" flew by the front of the "Unicorn Gundam". The two Beam Gatling Guns equipped on its right arm were releasing thick beam pellets, chasing the "Sinanju" as it zigzagged about.

"Miss Marida!"

(Go on first, Banagher. I'll handle this guy.)

The "Kshatriya" was releasing a rainbow phosphorus light as it opened its 4 binders, and drew its beam saber to slash at the " Sinanjju". The "Sinanju" spun its Naginata, which took down a

funnel, spun back again to beam the beam saber, and immediately flipped. The red machine took advantage of the "Kshatriya" lack of a right hand as it calculated its blind spot, and flew behind it. the funnels followed, and the beams crossed. The "Kshtatriya" predicted the "Sinanju" escape path, and a beam saber appeared from a hidden arm as three beam sabers flashed about, ripping through the darkness.

Sparks continued to fly between the two units, and the beam saber battle repeated itself back and forth as the two machine dazzled and dashed through space. The battle seemed even at this point, but Marida and the "Kshatriya" were completely worn out from the battles they had up till this point. Banagher found that the Psyco field was decreasing in brightness, and let the "Unicorn Gundam" pursue the two machines. If he could trigger a resonance with the "Kshatriya", perhaps they could force the " SInanju" to retreat. He approached the two machines as he could not provide supporting fire or even intervene, but before he could, the funnels flew right by him. (You're in the way! Hurry up and go !) Marida's voice rang. The "Sinanju" however ignored the funnels, which had the chance to surround it, and swung the Naginata, which grazed past the "Kshtriya" head.

"But…!"

(Hurry to "Industrial 7" and find the "Box"! Right now…!)

A brighter spark exploded, and the "Kshatriya" melted hidden arm floated in space. "Miss Marida!" Banagher yelled out, and

wanted to intervene between the two machines, (Follow the instructions, Banagher!) However, he heard another voice from the wireless communicator,

(As long as we get the "Box"…hurry…)

The interrupted voice caused Banagher to imagine Zinnerman's face in his mind as it blew through the cockpit. Banagher affirmed at the laser communication indicator had reverted back to normal for the time behind, he turned around to look at the back. (Hurry on, Banagher.) A spirited voice then rang in his ears.

(We'll catch up…to Marida's…)

The static noise got more intense, and the words signal lost flickered. Though the space debris was obstructing, the "Nahel Argama" was already close enough for the laser communicator to capture a signal."Audrey…!" Banagher shouted into the interrupted wireless communicator as he looked around at the visuals synchronized with the main camera. The expanded window activated on its own, and the familiar sight of a white ship appeared in the other end of space, but at that moment, (That's fine too.) An extremely clear voice rang through the wireless communicator in his helmet.

(The monster you created is looking for you.)

Despite being in the midst of an uninterrupted sword clash, Frontal said so without any panting. *I know about you,* that voice told Banagher this. *This man saw my inner heart when I was being swallowed by the emptiness.* Banagher however did not have much

time to ask about the meaning behind his words, (Banagher!) as Marida's angry voice reached his eardrums, prompting him to step on the pedal.

The "Unicorn Gundam" lit its main thruster and accelerated away from the battlefield. *Even if you know you will regret it in the future, you have to move on*—the clashing lights of battle from the " Kshatriya" and the "Sinanju" behind were telling him this and driving him on as he accelerated the machine without looking back . The NT-D signal vanished, and the full psycoframe shrank back, no longer glowing. The moveable armor was hidden in the exposed frame, the facemask covered the dual-eye sensor, and the "Unicorn" reverted to its lone horn stat as it flew amidst the Shoal Space.

The time was GMT 1045. The battle had lasted for 2½ hours, and he should be close enough to see it. Banagher activated the astronomy observation software as he called out the coordinate data of the Laplace Program. The red words <La+> were flickering , and the window was automatically expected. He looked around, surveying the shapes of the debris as he searched for his target, and after countless 'not a match' signs showing on the window, he finally caught sight of a flashing 'match' sign at an object far away.

The CG correction began, and the space colony visual appeared on the window. The large cylinder was over 20km in length and 6km in diameter, but the block noise was covering, preventing its details from being seen. One could tell from the difference in color however that one-third of the cylinder was covered by the 'wheel', and at the front of it was the colony builder attached to it—this is the unique shape of the "Magallanica", dubbed the 'snail', and

Banagher, who had stayed there for 8 months, could identify it immediately.

"I'm back…"

The sealed colony at the front, floating silently in the Shoal Space region, had swallowed the secret of the "Laplace Box" that toppled the world. Banagher subconsciously clenched his fists as he stared at the identifiable "Industrial 7" on the expanded window, knowing that it was the place. Everything began here, the "Unicorn", Audrey, Cardeas, Zinnerman and Marida, he met them all here, was taken in by the "Nahel Argama", and finally—

An icy killing intent instantly arrived, causing any further thoughts to dissipate. Banagher instinctively pushed the control stick down and raised the barrel of the beam rifle. The killing intent was gathered in front of the "Unicorn" as it turned around, breaking away from its path; it flashed in the form of a little light, and then grazed the "Unicorn" by the side in the form of a thick torrent of mega particles.

"What…!?"

—I found you, "Unicorn"!!

A 'voice' then came flying in, and he felt goosebumps upon thinking of the term 'malicious intent'. Another beam was fired—and after dodging this Beam Magnum-like energy block, Banagher too fought back while squeezing the trigger. The

similarly thick beam crossed through space, and the radioactive light from the beam shone on a nearby machine. A black armor appeared in the pitch black space.

What looked like a multi-bladed antenna from the front was giving off a golden light from the forehead of the machine merged into the eternal night. It was the black "Unicorn", the "Banshee", and the pilot within…

"Ensign Riddhe…!?"

Banagher did not wonder why that was the case. *The monster you created*—all he thought about was that the curse Frontal had laid on him took a physical form, and let the "Unicorn" race over to deal with the next wave of attacks. The "Banshee" too flipped its black frame around as the eyes hidden under the facemask glowed . The two Unicorn-types faced off for the 3rd time, at the place where it all began and will end, flashing their thruster flares as they looked for blind spots.

Part 9

"How…? Why!?"

There was a wail-like voice heard, "What's the matter?" Otto was the first to respond, and Mineva stared at the communication console from beyond his shoulder. "RX-0, Banagher! Answer me!" Ensign Mihiro shouted as the back profile of her putting her hand on her head entered Mineva's sights.

"Y-You're saying Ensign Riddhe's attacking you!? What's going on!?"

It seemed Otto's voice had yet to register in her ears as she worked to adjust the angle of the laser communication. Her voice was completely different from before, and Mineva heard her own heart jump violently. "It's Ensign Riddhe…!?" Otto too raised his voice.

"It means Londo Bell has arrived? Where's the "Unicorn"?"

"Too much debris, the sensors can't catch up. It seems to be fighting a single enemy unit."

The sensor operator responded. If the optical sensors could not catch up to their movements, there was no reason why the laser communication could. Mineva stared at Mihiro's back as the latter frantically adjusted the frequencies, seeing the voice that could have been picked up before the battle occurred. "Ensign Mihiro, the report, first!" Liam growled, causing Mineva's shoulders to jump. "Y-Yes…!" Mihiro instinctively straightened her back, and turned her still unrecovered expression at Liam,

"It's still uncertain. All I hear is Ensign Riddhe, and the " Banshee" attacking or something…"

The pale face let out this voice, causing Mineva's heart to race again, her fingertips trembling violently as she shuddered this

time. As she looked up at the main screen in shock, “The “Banshee ”…?” Otto murmured. “It’s the second “Unicorn”.” Aaron interjected,

“Why is it at such a place…wasn’t it destroyed on Earth?”

“That should be the case. When it sank together with the “ Garuda”…”

But Zinnerman, now at the cannon operator seat, did not witness it personally, and he hushed himself as he turned his pale face to the front. Mineva felt her body, seated on the commander seat, shivering along with her bones. Nobody present knew what happened to Riddhe after he landed on Earth, and even if they did, they would not be able to link those events with this current situation. Mineva wondered about these things only she knew of as her eyes landed on her palms, covered in the normal suit fabric.

These were not the hands to hold—these hands had made a decision to shake off the hand that was reached over to her. The “ Garuda” was fading fast, and he had that anguished expression of being seemingly cut off from the world. He bore the destiny of his family to prevent the “Box” from being opened…and more. He wanted to grab the hand he did not manage to grab, and made a pact with the black “Unicorn”—

This was an instinctive notion, and not born out of thought. *If this is the case, I’ll have to bear all responsibility.* Mineva felt that she could not just idle around at this place, but her mind could not think of what to do. As she looked around the bridge, Lieutenant Commander Conroy’s voice rang through the wireless

communicator, (ECOAS 920 notifying the Bridge, Base Jabber is ready to launch), causing her eyes to widen.

(We're ready to launch anytime. Please notify us of the situation .)

"This is the Captain. The situation's sticky now. Remain on standby for now."

(New "Sleeves" reinforcements?)

"Not sure." Otto gave a vague answer. The ECOAS squad, which was planned to reach "Industrial 7" first, had finished its preparations to launch. The SFS was dragged to the deck, ferrying the mobile suit called the "Loto", and the armed personnel were definitely on standby inside. Once Mineva thought about this her body took action on its own, and she stealthily left the commander seat. "Has the mobile suit squadron reached the "Kshtriya" yet!? Marida's still wounded!!" "They're rushing over now!!" With her back facing Zinnerman and Liam's shouts, Mineva left the bridge without meeting anyone.

She still had no idea of what she could do. Perhaps her action would cause the situation to be more chaotic, but her heart was filled with the notion to stop them, and with bated breath, she stepped off the corridor floor, got into the elevator, and pressed the button leading to the mobile suit deck level. (If the "Unicorn" is being held up, I guess we'll have to hurry to "Industrial 7" first. If we don't move fast, the "Rewloola" is going to catch up to us.) Conroy's anxious voice rang through the wireless communicator, causing her tense skin to shudder.

Part 10

Though they had predicted the course that would be taken, it was truly by luck that they could meet up so early. 30 minutes had passed since he left the Base Jabber, and there was still another 12 minutes worth of booster fuel in the machine. Riddhe equipped the Hyper bazooka on the back to the left hand, forming a dual-wielding combination with the beam rifle in the right hand, and fired the bazooka at the white machine caught on the reticule visual. The fired 380mm shot spun as it charged forward, and the hundreds of metal balls within the projectile exploded out.

At that instant, the "Unicorn", which had been flaring its thrusters, hurriedly spun around and passed the "Banshee" by its feet. Riddhe immediately fired the Vulcan cannons, but he knew this would be insufficient as suppressing fire. The thruster flares immediately disappeared, and the "Unicorn" spun around using the AMBAC as it hid in the shadows of the debris. An invisible intent climbed up Riddhe's back, causing goosebumps to crawl up his skin.

"It's fast…!"

He was clearly not in destroy mode, but Riddhe could not track him at all. Riddhe himself let the machine zigzag about, looking around as he searched for the enemy as he felt anxious about the pressure he bore. The psycommu monitor clearly showed that it was running normally, but there was no response from the NT-D. *What's not enough? It should be able to activate upon facing the* monster *that can control the machine like that.*

(Stop it, Ensign Riddhe!)

At that instant, the monster's voice ripped through Riddhe's ears, causing his hands on the control sticks to shudder slightly.

(You haven't seen the situation clearly. We've no reason to fight here!)

"Shut up!"

Riddhe pointed the beam rifle at the direction where the wireless signal came from, and squeezed the trigger. The mega-particles, with 4 times the usual power, raced through the sea of debris, and for an instant, shone upon the white machine hidden amidst the rocks. Once its lone horn showed some reflected light, Riddhe immediately raised the Hyper Bazooka again.

"You guys oppose the Federation and intend to approach the " Laplace Box". As a Federation officer, a member of the Marcenas family, I have a duty to stop you!"

A meaningless emptiness caused his face to contort as he squeezed the trigger. The bazooka projectile dragged a gaseous trail and hit a rock directly. (You're lying, Mr Riddhe!) However, Banagher's cry came from a completely different direction.

(You're not here to do such a thing. Hurry up and leave the " Banshee"! That machine's too dangerous!)

The wireless signal clearly showed where it was from, informing Riddhe that the "Unicorn" had moved from behind him

to above him. Having lost sight of the machine however, "Stop messing around!" he looked around and growled as he turned the "Banshee" towards the origin of the voice.

"Then why did I come here!?"

"It's because of Audrey, right!? You piloted that machine to bring her back…!"

The incoming voice caused the seed of shame to break apart and fade away. Riddhe's blood boiled, but his body was numbed by the words he could not comprehend, and he merely watched the "Unicorn" pass by him from above as he forgot to attack.

"…Yeah you're just a kid. So young that you don't understand what you can and can't say…"

His uncontrollable rage contorted his lips, becoming that of a self-depreciating smirk. The immature-looking face he saw on the "Nahel Argama" faced through his mind, and his shoulders were humping as he seemingly laughed. *Right, he's just a kid. Even if the "Unicorn" is so almighty, that guy hasn't changed since that. He'll just show that immature self-conciousness of his, but he can't imagine his existence threatening others severely—*

"And such a guy's actually called a Newtype, messing with the world irresponsibility…! I won't forgive you!"

His rage was embodied in the form of a light from the Beam Magnum, grazing the "Unicorn". The eyes under the "Banshee" facemask flickered, and he leapt into space, swinging the beam

tonfa on the right hand. He stepped off a piece of debris floating in orbit, closed in on the retreating "Unicorn", and spotted the beam lights from both sides through the anti-glare filter. The "Unicorn" frame easily dodged the slashes that that kept coming as it retreated back, (MR Riddle, please stop!) Banagher's voice rang again.

(The "Unicorn" and "Banshee" are attracting each other now. I can't hold back any longer…!)

"You mean you're holding back now!? How much do you want do humiliate me!!"

After firing the last shot, he threw the Hyper Bazooka away. The "Unicorn" dodged got to the bottom, and hid its white frame hid amidst the clustred space debris. A loud clank rang in a corner of Riddhe's mind as he stepped on the pedal to pursue Banagher. The light from the Beam Magnum flashed by the accelerating " Banshee", hitting a piece of space debris directly, and the shattered rock rained on the machine in the form of pellets.

"How…!"

(Now's not the time for this! Frontal…!)

The splattering sounds on the machine were mixed with Banagher's drowned voice. *He just used the remaining space debris to attack me—so that means he can shoot me down directly if he wants to? Riddhe felt a chill in regards to this difference in skill level, and gritted*

his teeth as he stared at the psycommu monitor on the display board. The NT-D still would not activate, and the "Banshee" continued to remain in slumber as it merely covered him in the form of a machine.

"Give me power, "Banshee"…!"

If there's a need, I can sell you my useless soul and body. As he subconsciously muttered it, a high-frequency wave resembling a metal resonance again shook his eardrums, and his temples felt a sharp pain as the 'voice' rang.

—Right behind, Riddhe.

The 'voice' flowed in the form of a golden light, piercing through the skull. He instinctively reacted and moved the machine , and the "Banshee" turned to the back, firing its Beam Magnum. The turnaround attack glided through the darkness and destroyed the rock, causing the scattered shrapnel to scatter in front of him like fireworks. The scatters shrapnel surrounded the "Unicorn", causing it to stumble within.

"Who is it!?"

Riddhe put his hand on his helmet as he looked around. He had yet to realize the true identity of this voice, but he first managed to detect the "Unicorn" flying away with a trail of light following it, and let the "Banshee" pursue, ostensibly drawn to it. The white machine again got below to his feet, kicked off a piece of space debris, and flew up from behind—despite it escaping from his sights, Riddhe could clearly sense the trajectory the "Unicorn" took.

"I can see it…!"

Riddhe let the machine glide over to that path, and swung the beam saber he was wielding in the left hand. The "Unicorn" too drew its beam saber and blocked it at the last moment, causing the beam saber to let out a flash, and the clashing particle sparks spread explosively. Riddhe saw colors come out from the intense white flash, a rainbow prism light flowing about. This light surrounded the "Banshee" and the "Unicorn", causing their Psycoframes to glow, and the phosphorus light to be released.

(A Psyco field…!?)

Banagher's falter came in the form of a wave. As the light seeped into the cockpit, Riddhe swung the beam saber upwards from its entwined position. The "Unicorn" hand wielding the beam saber was parried away, and the unit staggered backwards, making an opening. Having predicted that the "Unicorn" would light its burners to balance itself and escape, the "Banshee" immediately raise its arm squeezed the trigger of the Beam Magnum.

"Got you!"

The thick beam grazed past the "Unicorn", and it was knocked away while using the shield to block the scattered particles. Riddhe could see his fear, hesitation, whatever he planned to do, and hallucinated the light surrounding the machine becoming his limbs, devouring the "Unicorn". *I won't lose sight of it again.* His senses were expanded to 360 degrees, and he could even detect the heat released from the "Unicorn".

—Right, that's right. Corner him.

A pressure, either a gust or a light, passed through his temple, causing the 'voice' to ring, and Riddhe's eyes to widen.

"Psycowaves…!? Alberto!?"

The thoughts were filled with malice, and there was no doubt Alberto had arrived on this battlefield as well. He could sese the latter's thoughts synchronizing with him, expanding his senses. The message from before—supply materials, was this what he was referring to? Riddhe's realistic thoughts were overpowered by the distracting light as he looked for the "Unicorn" that was flying around his senses. Alberto's thoughts had caught sight of that machine attempting to hide in the blind spots, and were conveyed to Riddhe's thoughts. His hatred and malice exploded in Riddhe, causing the latter's heart to pump and race.

—The "Unicorn" is now a prisoner of the Psyco field. You can win once you draw the power of the "Banshee".

The 'voice' reached him. There was no time to consider why there was a voice, and neither was there a need to; Riddhe kept hearing his wild heartbeat, ostensibly about to break apart. The " Banshee" Psycoframe released a resonating sound, and the anomaly, the "Unicorn", was leaping in the gap between the two thoughts. The machine that turned his fate haywire was a monster that snatched Mineva away and wanted to activate the "Box" again.

"If it wasn't around…!"

His heart was breaking apart as it reached its limit, and a hot mucosa gushed out. It seeped out from his body and flowed to every corner of the machine, and the "Banshee" let out a beast-like growl. (You mustn't, Mr Riddhe!) Banagher's yell however was just a noise mixed amidst the machine's roar. The NT-D sign gave a blood red sign, and Riddhe imagined it to be an extension of his limbs.

The machine's armor slid as he imagined, and the and the frame let out a golden glow as the limbs were stretched. The facemask was pulled down, and the rooster crown-shaped horn expanded to the side, forming a V-shaped multi-bladed antenna, glowing like a lion's mane.

"This is the "Gundam"…!"

It took less than 0.5 seconds to transform into the destroy mode—yet it felt so long. His senses were stretched along with the machine, and his nerves were stretched till the fingertips of the manipulators. His body felt heavy, seemingly lying in fluid, but he understood that his concept of time had been distorted. In this world, where a second is dragged to 10 times the usual length, even the air felt viscous. The separation of the mind and the physical body had pressurized the flesh and bones that could only move at normal speed.

However, there was no need to panic, for he did not need a physical body to control the "Banshee" in this state. The Intention Automatic System and the Psycoframe, which would respond to

the pilot's will, would smoothly allow him to operate this machine that had obtained the appearance of a "Gundam". Riddhe tweaked his nerves, which were connected to the machine, and let the " Banshee" charge towards the "Unicorn". The machine closed in rapidly, giving off golden phosphorus light as the silhouette of the black "Gundam" appeared in the eternal night.

A wail-like voice rang, and the pure white armor of the " Unicorn" let out a red phosphorus light. It avoided the "Banshee" slash and flipped backwards, expanded its frame to obtain a " Gundam" appearance, and looked back at him. Its transformation, together with the drawing of the beam rifle, merely looked too slow. Before the Beam Magnum was fired, Riddhe flew up immediately and jumped onto the "Unicorn Gundam" head.

"Too slow!"

The knee, with its psycoframe exposed, kicked at the "Unicorn Gundam" head. The latter machine was sent sprawling back, slamming into the space debris as it slowed down. *Watch me now, Alberto. I'll use these hands of mine to rip that monster which denied our existence.* The reticule was aimed at the spinning fluorescent lights of the "Unicorn Gundam", and Riddhe's finger squeezed the trigger of the beam rifle.

"I got you, Banagher!!"

The emptied E-pack was ejected, and a torrent of mega particles raced out. A violent colorful light ripped through the light belt of psyco field, dragging a long trail in space.

Part 11

"You mustn't, Riddhe!"

Mineva inadvertently shouted as a battleship-like cannon beam grazed past, causing the control room of the Type-94 Base Jabber to be shaken violently. The attachments at the back rattled, and Mineva's body shrank in fear as she was nearly thrown off her seat . (It's a Unicorn-type!) She heard a voice from the wireless radio in her helmet.

(It's a black unit. I can see the glowing phenomenon from before . It looks like both units are in destroy mode.)

The report from the "Loto" driver, seated at the platform "The " Gundams" are fighting…?" caused Conroy to murmur in response . Mineva stood up from the rear seat at the back, and turned her body to lean over to the back profile of the steering seat, and stared at the aurora-like light floating outside the window. The belt of light ostensibly surrounded the two Unicorn-type machines, forming a 'forcefield' ranging tens of kilometers, and looked as large as a fist from here, a cocoon of light fluttering around. The light was as faint as the afterimage left in the eyes, and it felt surreal even though it was floating in front of her eyes. However, the occasional beam lights were ever so sharp, causing Mineva to recognize that both machines were fighting.

The light in the Psyco field was as what she saw on Earth. The clash between the two Unicorn-type machines would create a demonic light that would absorb human life. It had been more than 10 minutes since she managed to convince Conroy and leave

the “Nahel Argama” with the advance party. In the face of this development, which was proceeding in the worst direction, Mineva felt a sense of despair, fearing that she could no longer prevent any further developments. The furor surging from amidst the light was that intense. It was several hundred kilometers away, but the clashing ‘presences’ of the duo was strong enough to numb the skin.

"It's too dangerous to approach them, Leader. If we rush into the battle between the two "Unicorns"…"

Lieutenant Garity, holding the control joysticks, probably felt the same thing as he said so with a pale face. The Base Jabbers and the two Lotos" fastened on it in tank form were powerless in combat, and one could imagine the results if it charged into the battlefield. Mineva deduced that Conroy would make the decision to retreat, "Just a little closer, please!" and interrupted their conversation, "Princess…!" Conroy gave her a chiding look, but she did not look back as she stared at the flickering light outside the window.

"The psyco field is expanding. If we get close, I may be able to pass on my words."

"But that light's like an energy forcefield. The Base Jabber will be crushed if it goes in."

"I shall go even if I am alone. Please lend me a portable burner."

Mineva said unflinchingly. "What nonsense…!" and Conroy sounded furious as he lambasted back. Though she had quickly disobeyed the agreement to obey him at all costs, Mineva had no other choice. She leaned forward from her seat, and stared at Conroy with that queenly expression of hers.

"Both sides are related to us. If they sense my existence—"

A beam again fizzled by, and the shockwaves impacted the control room. The co-pilot stopped the ringing siren, and Garity turned his head back to shout at Conroy, “We’re leaving!” Conroy stared at Mineva’s unwavering expression silently, giving a piercing stare that reminded others of their moniker ‘Manhunters’. Soon after, his lips broke into a smile, and he lowered his head slightly.

“…So that, at length, it grew a single shaft upon it's brow and to a virgin came—and dwelled in her and in her silvered glass.”

He muttered this to himself, his eyes could not be seen as it was covered by the helmet. This was one of the verses from the poem of the unicorn; Mineva was secretly surprised that this man actually memorized this line, and could not think of a reason why the man did so as she stared at the ECOAS’ Commander’s sidelong face. Conroy immediately lifted his head and hid the smile on his lips. “Proceed forward as it is, 40 seconds.” He said firmly.

“When the countdown reaches zero, turn away and pass through the light field towards the target space.”

Garity turned back, clearly wanting to give a look of protest in his eyes for an instant. However, he looked back at the console, “ Roger that” and said so stoically. “Begin countdown.” The moment the co-pilot said this, Mineva looked at Conroy sidelong, and the latter looked outside the window. “We’ll head back if the situation’s bad.” He said.

"Please call them back. Perhaps you might be able to tame those wild horses."

He looked back at her once he said this. Without a doubt, the expression this man showed was that of one who could only rely on his own instincts and escape from death time and time again. Perhaps he had this intention when he made the decision to let her come along and leave the "Nahel Argama". Mineva accepted this thinking with some skepticism as she leaned her back on the sturdy backrest. She closed her eyes and gathered her thoughts on the flashes flickering under her eyelids, and the control room jerked a little, probably due to a hit by a small piece of debris or something. "10 seconds have passed". She heard this notification from the co-pilot.

—RIddhe, it's me. Mineva Zabi.

She called out, her fists on her lap clenched tightly. The engine sounds of the Base Jabber suddenly faded away, and she felt the sensation of the icy vacuum permeating through the insides of her normal suit.

—I empathize with your pain. Do not do this again. You will hurt yourself more the more you fight.

—You caused this.

The hideous 'voice' took the form of a pressure, and resonated with the anguished eyes she saw when she rejected his hand. Mineva felt her body, drifting with her consciousness, shudder a little.

—You rejected me. I told you not to leave me alone, but you abandoned me.

That crazed, euphoric thought process was forcing its existence upon Mineva's. He knew he was suffering, but was unable to stop, and one soul was exerting violence on another, revealing a childish directness and cruelty in the thoughts.

—It's like Mom. Everyone only cares about someone. Nobody cares about me."

"Riddhe, that is…!"

The words she shouted unconsciously caused her lips to move in reality. *That is not true* she wanted to continue subconsciously, but she realized she had yet to reach her hand out. She was simply approaching, unwilling to reciprocate, for she knew these were the hands she should not raise.

—Are you here to make fun of me!?

The agitated voice became a needle piercing her body. *No,* Mineva wanted to form her thoughts, but they were unable to become words, and her physical body was writhing in pain. "Your Highness…!?" Conroy yelled as he turned around in shock.

"Riddhe…!"

She barely managed to rein in her thoughts that were nearly shredded and repulsed, and her physical body reached its trembling hand forward as she sat on the chair. A ferocious light glowed from the psyco field as her fingers missed, and a gale strong enough to shake her existence struck her.

Part 12

A familiar cry rang in Marida's mind, causing her palm resting on the ball-shaped grip to numb. There was an existence reverberating her senses, telling her that the two Unicorn-type machines were clashing, charging between them without any sign of defense.

"Princess…?"

It's too reckless. The moment she instinctively looked back, a ring of light exploded in front of her, and a shredding-like pain pummeled on her together with the jolts. She however ignored the pain as she persisted with gripping onto the controls, maneuvering her machine to a direction where none of the explosion lights could be seen. With the explosions of the sliced funnels in the background, the "Sinanju" closed in.

(Do you have the time to look around?)

Frontal's voice came, and the beam Naginata was swung at the "Kshatriya" right hand right when he grazed by. The two beam Gatling guns equipped on the forehead were melted and sliced

apart, and Marida detached them before they exploded. She turned around, seeing the fireball engulf them, and let the last funnel turn towards the "Sinanju". This automatic cannon pod was unable to return to its mother unit in time, and its battery was almost depleted; once moved like a bullet as it darted towards the "Sinanju" with its back turned on it.

The Mega particles were released from the funnel, which had yet to miss a single shot, but the "Sinanju" barely dodged to the left at the last moment. *Just as I expected.* She redirected the funnel and let it charge towards the "Sinanju", and it became a tracking missile as it activated its thrusters, crossing paths with the red machine. The red machine however slowly raised its beam rifle, and the grenade launcher equipped under the barrel let out a gaseous trail.

The funnel collided with the fired shot head on, and turned into a fireball, the "Sinanju" using its light to hide its whereabouts. Marida scanned through the space, littered with debris, through her naked eyes, for she was unable to sense him. He was adept at hiding his killing intent completely, probably a result of him not thinking of humans as anything, ostracizing them from his world.

(I suppose your funnels are exhausted, Lieutenant Marida.)

The presence had gotten behind her without warning, and there was an icy voice. The scatter mega particle guns in the binders were destroyed, and the "Kshatriya" had no weapon other than its beam sabers. Marida turned her machine towards the source of Frontal's voice, as according to the wireless communicator, and scanned the frigid space filled with debris.

(An enhanced human is supposed to have a portion of its mind blanked out so as to synchronize with machines…how curious. There seems to be something inside that blankness, causing your senses to be dulled.)

A voice, filled with pity for its own kind, seeped out from the shadows of the space debris, causing goosebumps in her as it quivered her cheeks. This empty man filled his emptiness with vengeance, and unabashedly proclaimed this was the collective will of the Spacenoids; his voice continued on—

(It is a pity. You could have been a vessel yourself.)

The killing intent surged, and a beam flew from a shadow of the debris. Marida tried to evade right before that, but the machine was thoroughly damaged, and due to its unbalanced mass, could not move according to her will, causing the beam to scorch the " Kshatriya" armor as it was unable to dodge in time. The beams continued to pummel the machine, ostensibly making a mockery of it, causing the linear seat to teeter violently as if it was about to break apart. Cracks appeared on the all-view monitor panels, and as Marida gritted her teeth as she withheld her groans, she witnessed the sight of the "Sinanju" closing in on the undamaged panels.

There was no time to deploy the hidden arms inside the binders , and the beam Naginata swooped in on its leg. A jolt heavier than before shook the cockpit, causing her head to hit the console. The air cushions could not absorb the impact completely, and the helmet visor was shattered into pieces once it hit the edge of the

console; at the same time, a bellow could be head from the flank, and a suffocating feeling, more profound than the pain, was pulverizing her. Viscous globs came out from her mouth, and the reddish-black fluids were dyed upon the cracked visor. While blood was leaking from the helmet, there were countless lights releasing afterimages amidst the starry space, fluttering away quickly from the left lower leg of the "Kshatriya".

Her lung was probably punctured by a rib. From the moment she was created, she was trained to be familiar with diagnosing her body conditions; she moved her arm and leg, trying to control herself and stop spinning, but the machine was low on mobility once it lost a leg, and could not stop spinning, and she could not grasp the location of the "Sinanju". *It'll be over if I get hit again next time—how much longer can I fight?* The instant her fading consciousness had this fleeting thought, Zinnerman's face appeared amidst the flowing stars for some reason, and she felt skeptical about her subconscious elation.

The eyes, filled with warmth deep within, drifted away from her spinning consciousness, and replacing it was the sound of Banagher's presence as he continued to fight. Mineva seemed to be yelling something as she tried to enter the battlefield, while her allies from the "Garencieres" and the familiar faces of those on the "Nahel Argama" were showing their existences to her, drifting in the stars. *What is this?* She wondered in her burning consciousness. *Is this the true 'light' that reflects my shape and appearance…and forms in others?*

Maybe it's just my imagination. Their existences however allow me to become human. Humans caused me to be dull, weak, affected by emotions,

but I'm alive, Marida thought. *I'm not human, I'm alive.I found my own self through interacting with others, and the 'humans' I have taken for granted are calling for me.*

(It's over, Marida Cruz.)

Frontal's voice was ringing emptily in her ears. The price he paid for severing ties with everyone else and elevating himself was that he was not human, just an object with a pitiful vengeful spirit afflicted upon him. *It's not over yet. I'm different from you. I've people supporting me.* She gulped the oozing blood as she glared at the " Sinanju" through the use of the remaining monitor panels, pulling the ball grip with her all strength.

"It's not over yet—!"

The "Kshatriya" raised the beam saber in its left hand and sliced off its right shoulder. The frame supporting the binder was melted off, and the impact of the metal melting off reached her shoulder as two severed binders floated. She sliced off the left shoulder binders too, and with the machine now devoid of its wings, charged towards the "Sinanju", prompting her four binders along.

The psycoframe on the activation areas received the commands through the psycowaves, causing the binders to light its thrusters, becoming a form of funnel themselves. Two units with sub-arms intact in them fired beams at will, surrounding the "Sinanju" while the other two charged at the red machine in the form of large missiles.

(What…?)

Frontal sounded rattled as he exclaimed, slicing off one of them with a beam Naginata. The internal generator from the sliced binder let out a large ball of light, and the other binders attacked the "Sinanju" while it was wobbly. These binders, each of a similar mass to a mini mobile suit, crashed into the red machine, triggering several explosions. Before it was engulfed by the many layers of fireballs, Marida let the "Kshatriya" escape from the scene.

The light overpowered and removed Frontal's presence, blowing away the surrounding debris. In the end, she witnessed the "Sinanju" shield and a damaged arm fluttering through with a mini nova-like shrinking in the backdrop, followed by countless icy debris remaining amidst the blueish-white gas. *Did I…succeed?* She watched the melted shield with the Neo Zeon insignia reflect the distant sunlight as it faded away, and stepped on the pedal to accelerate without looking back.

The rising G-force caused the blood floating in the cockpit to drift, and the monitor panels were rattling. The fractured rib had punctured her lungs, causing fresh blood to exude from her mouth ; however, she gritted her teeth as she dragged the "Kshatriya" forward. The "Nahel Argama" was nearby, but she still could not return. *I have to prevent the 'light' supporting me from behind. I'm not alone, many 'lights' allow me to take shape. I have to protect the real ' light' forming within me.*

I can't die—no, I don't want to die yet. This thought appeared in her for the first time since her birth, and with this notion as motivation, the "Kshatriya", now human-like from the loss of its

binders, raced through the vacuum. The conducting fluids were dripping like blood, igniting and causing small fireballs as the one-legged humanoid drew a trail of light like a shooting star.

Part 13

Multiple thoughts struck Alberto in the form of a gust, and the battlefield, now creating torrents all over the place, blew strong gusts. It was a savage yet familiar presence, the feeling of his scalp being tugged at, causing him to put a hand on his helmet.

"What? That's not Riddhe? Who's calling…!?"

He peered beyond the window of the control room and looked around. The only things he could see however was the thruster lights flashing about amidst the belt of light wavering about. The " Banshee" and "Unicorn Gundam" had gotten into the shadows, but one could say this was to be expected since there was a battle between them. The two machines continued to fly about at high speeds, and this base Jabber was simply a turtle compared to them. It was miraculous that he could quickly notice the two clashing mobile suits so soon after entering the battlefield.

Of course, there was a reason to this miracle. The containers on the platform contained a set of Unicorn-type spare psycoframe. It did not escape its confines and out of the container, but the psycoframe inside would definitely be resonating, giving off light. The best proof of this theory was the psyco field floating outside the window, coupled with the "Banshee" and "Unicorn Gundam" that were fighting. The shockwaves from the clashes between these two machines merely extended towards the light approximately

20km in diameter, and did not escape the field. They surely would be able to escape considering their acceleration, but they did not. It felt as if the field was a link binding them together. The "Unicorn Gundam" seemed to be restrained by a binding feature of the psyco frame, and it was unable to escape no matter how it tried—this Base Jabber must have been the one binding them together.

The container was resonating with the "Banshee" psycoframe, forming a net that captured the "Unicorn Gundam". Even without the psycommu function, Alberto was still able to tell where the " Unicorn Gundam" was, and had conveyed this information to Riddhe. One step more, and they would be able to corner Banagher, but there was another thought interfering, like a wet blanket interrupting—"Someone's entering my mind…!" Alberto sounded annoyed as his hand remained on his throbbing temples, "Mr Alberto!" but another voice called out from reality, causing him to turn and glare.

"We're at our limits. We have to leave."

The pilot, ranked a Lieutenant, had been calling out for Alberto many times, looking at him palely through the helmet visor. Another thick beam of the beam Magnum rifle passed by, and a flash shone through the window, filling the control area. Did the " Banshee" fire it, or was it the "Unicorn Gundam"? No matter who it was however, Alberto knew that he would be blown away if they were to take a single graze. Intriguingly however, he did not feel fear; rather, he was more terrified of the notion of not doing anything and escaping from here. If Martha were to use the colony laser, there was no way he could save that woman. "No." Alberto

immediately denied the request and continued look at the two thruster flashes with his eyes.

"If we leave, the "Banshee" will be isolated. The "Unicorn" is worn out from the continual battles; we're able to take it down if we keep this up. Hang on for just a little longer."

We have to bury the "Unicorn Gundam" quickly and get the "Banshee " to look for her. "But…" the Lieutenant argued back, and Alberto clenched his fists as he hollered, "JUST DO IT!"

"If we're successful, I'll give you more money than whatever you can spend in your lifetime. Anyway—"

A gale blew by, passing through the ceiling, robbing him of the chance to continue on. A familiar thought entered him in the form of a gust, just as before. "What is this…?" Alberto endured the nauseous sensation as he groaned and looked at his feet. There were several thin lines of light on the floor covered by shadows, and after they flickered in his eyes, they raced towards the front of the Base Jabber, becoming a visible light in his sights.

Alberto was unable to catch sight of the fleeing light that escaped his eyes, so the replay visuals of the surveillance cameras were shown on the monitors. The rough CG-corrected image showed a stout machine. Its body was surrounded by the lights of the thrusters, but Alberto had quite an impression on it. It was deformed due to the damages, but it was—

"Is that…!?"

The pores on him opened, and his armpits were covered in sweat. It had lost the four binders, its biggest characteristics, but there was no doubt what it was. Alberto saw the "Kshatriya", completely stripped to its bare bones, and instinctively reached his hand for the wireless communicator hidden in the helmet. "Riddhe , do you hear me?" he called out to the wireless communicator as he leaned forward, looking around.

"A Neo Zeon mobile suit is headed towards you. Don't do anything to it! Th-the person inside is…!"

His mouth was frozen in fear, and he was gasping for breath as he could not say the name. Only noise could be heard from the communicator, as Riddhe did not give any reply. Alberto could not sense that his feelings were conveyed, and could only hammer the console hastily. *We're able to agree on cornering the "Unicorn Gundam", so why can't I give such a simple instruction!!*

"Go after that machine! Capture that pilot alive!" Alberto yelled as he grabbed the Lieutenant, "You got to be kidding…!" only to be rebuffed; immediately afterwards, a flash from the beam Magnum passed by from above, and the Base Jabber shook greatly as it was affected by the shockwaves, the scattered particles raining on the machine itself.

"Marida!"

For the first time, Alberto called out her name amidst the turmoil. The "Kshatriya" light could no longer be seen as only the light of the battle far away continued to flicker in the field.

Part 14

The Beam Magnums were fired at each other, and as they clashed, the "Banshee" brought its left manipulator forward. The psycommu shock waves released by both sides allowed them to grasp each other's location, and an invisible repulsion field occurred between the two immobile machines.

(This isn't going to end…!)

Both sides had similar power outputs and calculation abilities. Even if they were to rob each other of the systems, it would be impossible to determine the winner. Riddhe pulled the "Banshee", and the "Unicorn Gundam" did likewise, firing the Vulcan guns on its head as it let out a passing trail of fire. They both drew their beam sabers at the same time, and these two machines, practically peas in a pod, were slashing at each other.

"Right, my instincts matches yours. But—!"

The "Banshee" fired its beam Magnum from up close, and mounted the emptied rifle on the side of the left mount. It put its shield onto the back, and once it revealed the beam tonfas on its arms, it charged at the "Unicorn Gundam" right after it had dodged a beam.

"My will to kill is different from yours!!!"

The "Banshee" lit its thrusters and swung its beam tonfas sideways. One beam saber alone was unable to block the attack, and the beam blade of the tonfa grazed by the side of the

suppressed “Unicorn Gundam” head. The gaseous plasma floated out from the melted armor, and the “Unicorn Gundam” immediately turned around and left the “Banshee”. (Mr Riddhe. You’re being consumed by the machine!) Banagher’s voice rang.

(The “Banshee” NT-D is out of control. You’ll be destroyed at this rate!)

“That’s fine. The NT-D’s a destroyer system of Newtypes anyway! It’s a system that purges the ailments that threatens humanity!”

The “Banshee” left the space, turned around, and opened its arms wide, taking the form of a windmill as it slashed the “ Unicorn Gundam”. The white machine barely retreated at the last moment, and activated the two beam tonfas.

“Because of a stupid fantasy of humanity continuing to evolve, a curse from 100 years ago is now reality! Someone has to be sacrificed to maintain the status quo!”

Both sides continued to spin, and the beams continued to clash two, three times as they fought through infighting methods. Riddhe pretended to attack for a 4th time, but kept his tonfas back, and charged right at the “Unicorn Gundam”. The tonfa swung at the face was parried aside, and the other beam blade aimed at the flank was blocked by a beam saber. 4 beam sabers were warding off each other, (Mr Riddhe…!) Banagher’s groan rang through the communicator.

"You're just like me; we're suitable sacrifices for this. The Marcenas left this curse behind, and the Vist family hid this curse. We inherit their bloods; once we vanish, this 100 year grudge will disappear."

(Are you serious…!?)

"That shouldn't have happened. It was supposed to be a prayer, not a curse. If not for the existence called Newtypes being created …!"

As his heating consciousness yelled out, the "Unicorn Gundam" moved its arms, and the "Banshee" had its tonfas parried backwards as it staggered. Riddhe managed to steady himself immediately, but the "Unicorn Gundam" got behind him, at a speed such that it was immediately to see it whilst time were multiplied by 10.

The machine, moving at near-teleportation speed, swung its tonfa at the back of the "Banshee". The latter dodged the attack aimed for the shoulder joint, and turned around to face the continuous attacks, dodging the beam blades that were coming at the shoulder joints at terrifying precision as he twitched his body left and right. "That strength of yours is the greatest proof!" Riddhe yelled, and the "Banshee" reacted faster than his controls as it swung the tonfa at the beam particles closing in on him.

"You're no longer an ordinary human, you're a human adapted to space, a subspecies of humanity called Newtypes, the type of people who turned the curse of "Laplace Box" into reality…!"

Riddhe capitalized on the forward momentum as he stepped forward, and it was time for him to attack. The beam blades continued to flicker, letting out sparks like a machine gun, causing the phosphorous light released from the machines to be dulled.

"That's why I'll beat you with my hands as a normal human, even if my soul's devoured by this machine!"

To maintain the current world, the society where billions of ordinary people lived—Riddhe continued to swing the beam tonfas as he harbored the words that were exploding within his heart. (No, that 's not it, Mr Riddhe!) Banagher's voice echoed, and the eyes of the "Unicorn Gundam" were suddenly filled with a light, resembling that of a human's.

(You're a Newtype too. The light from this psycoframe is coming from you.)

"What…!?"

(You should be able to hear this. Everyone's worried about you. Audrey, and the guys on the "Nahel Argama".)

The light from the two eyes passed through his scorching heart and mind, causing his hand on the controls to grip. The 'voice' he had excluded from his consciousness before came in, entering his frozen body. *What, why, sto-stop it!!* Whilst he was unable to distinguish between the many voices, Alberto's voice was mixed in amongst them, simply calling out for something, and a pressure was ostensibly choking him. *What's this? I can see the thoughts of others. I can sense the existences of those related to me.* (Alberto…my

brother's calling out too.) In the midst of this vortex of confusion and fear, Riddhe quietly listened in on Banagher.

(It's not about our births, but how we're living on. Anyone can become Newtypes, as long as we don't lose the heart to feel.)

"…It's just noise coming from the Psycommu. It's just the psycowaves the "Banshee" is picking up!"

This has to be the case. If that's not it, what exactly am I doing? Riddhe continued to yell as he rejected the "Unicorn Gundam", but the voices continued to ring, causing him to cuddle his head. (The machine's just an amplifier! Why don't you understand…!) Banagher's growl broke through his skullcap, causing much more pressure on his throbbing mind.

(That "Banshee" is also a beast of possibilities. It has a system that reacts to the hearts of humans.)

"Shut up. Don't say anything…!"

(If the "Box" really brings disaster, just destroy it. Let us go together, Mr Riddhe. Audrey hopes for it too.)

His temples were throbbing, and his head was about to be splinted. He could feel the strength seeping from within and the force flowing in from outside, clashing with each other as they burdened his mind. *That's enough. Stop it! Don't just talk in my mind !* "SHUT UP!" He yelled with all his might, and stepped on the

pedal until the end. The “Banshee” escaped from the “Unicorn Gundam”, hid the lights of the beam tonfas, took his beam rifle again, and looked around tentatively.

“Where’re you, Alberto!? The noise’s too strong! I can’t hear you!”

The psyco field flickered along with the light, and the Base Jabber flying about unsteadily appeared in the "Banshee" sighs. "Is that is…!?" Riddhe muttered as a severe migraine struck him, causing him to cover his helmet with both hands. *Stop it, stop it! Don’t do it!* Multiple thoughts pierced through his mind, and the silhouette of the Base Jabber was shrouded with denial. He suppressed the trembling going from his skull to his helmet, and glared at the Base Jabber with hostility.

"No, that's the guy that was being noisy just now…!"

That’s not Alberto’s machine. Having recognized this, the " Banshee" drew its beam saber and charged towards the Base Jabber. (Don't don't it, Riddhe!) with Banagher's plea behind him, he caught sight of the bed-shaped Type-94 Base Jabber, and saw 2 mobile armors fastened upon it. He recognized that it was the Manhunters' tanks, and memories of what seemed a month ago appeared in his mind. The smell of the "Nahel Argama" mobile suit deck entered his nostrils, the model of the biplane that was still left in his room, the call Squad Leader Norm made before he died, *”I haven’t forgotten about the promise to watch a movie!” Ensign Mihiro’s murmurs--*

"Stop trying to confuse me…!"

He shook aside the memories that were stopping him, and drew the beam saber. The Type-94 Base Jabber, without any decent weapon, could only avoid the attack slowly, and when the particles were about to hit the cockpit at the front, another 'voice' from afar passed through his voice in the form of a 'voice'.

--Stop it, there's someone important to you on board.

A woman's 'voice' clearly rang in his mind, and he instinctively drew back his beam saber. The Base Jabber just happened to pass by the "Bansee" within 0.1 seconds right , and the face staring at him through the canopy filter entered his sights.

"Mineva…!?"

Despite her being dressed in the normal suit, he could clearly determine that she was shouting something. *Why?* The moment he pondered this, the Base Jabber passed by his feet, and the departing trail of thruster light increased its distance from the " Banshee". Riddhe let his machine float about, and then, he spotted a machine, ostensibly the owner of the 'voice', pass by his sights.

It was a monoeye mobile suit with a massive frame, releasing a presence different from killing intent at the "Banshee". It was a different profile, but it seemed similar to that 4-winged mobile suit . *Mineva called it the "Kshatriya"; is that one of the Neo Zeon units that allied with the "Nahel Argama"?* Riddhe thought of this within an instant as he looked back at the monoeye that was clearly staring at him. However, he looked away from that one-legged mobile suit before he could be caught in confusion. There's someone important

to you on board--*how do you know that?* ***You're just a man-made puppet****. How do you know about Mineva and I...*

(Miss Marida!) The "Unicorn Gundam" called out as it approached the lone-legged mobile suit. The psycoframe was giving of a glow that was either yellow or green, the rainbow light pressing upon the "Banshee". *You see, we can resonate like this. Banagher's consciousness drifted to him in the form of the light, causing blood to gush up Riddhe's dizzy consciousness. He raised the beam rifle, loaded the spare magazine, and aimed the gun at the source of the light. At that moment, a thick beam was fired from the back, and the "Banshee" stumbled due to the impact.*

"A ship cannon…!?"

The main cannon-class mega particles continued to fire, the beams robbing the "Banshee" of its footing as they ripped through the vacuum. Riddhe escaped from the torrent, and glared at the source of the shots through the filter of the psyco fields. The white ship frame of the "Nahel Argama" was gradually approaching as it blew apart the debris in its way. *Stop, stop it. You mustn't!* Countless voices pressurized him along with the voices, and the lights and voices nearly seared his senses away as they rained upon the "Banshee". *That's the ship I was on firing at me now.* Thoughts of denial was chiding his mind--

"IS EVERYONE GOING TO DENY ME NOW…!?"

He yelled, and aimed the beam rifle at the "Nahel Argama". *That bag's full of denial thoughts Got to make that bridge disappear.* Riddhe's finger squeezed the trigger without thinking about

anything else. His sights, synchronized with the "Banshee", was dyed right, and he clearly spotted the wooden horse-like bridge.

(STOP IT--!)

Banagher screamed, but Riddhe had already squeezed the trigger. The mega particles encapsulated in cylinders within the E-Pack were completely released, and the Beam Magnum let out a beam, firing right at the "Nahel Argama"--however, the one-legged mobile suit suddenly stopped in front of this beam.

The "Kshatriya" arms and body were spread wide, looking at if it was protecting the "Nahel Argama", its massive body taking a direct hit from the Beam Magnum. Its upper body was instantly vaporized, and the lower body drifted in space temporarily before an explosion expanded, causing the "Kshatriya" to disappear without a trace.

(Woah--!)

A voiceless light spread about, resonating with the roar of a beast'. It was the voice of the "Unicorn Gundam"--Banagher's voice . This voice seemed to have caused him to lose all sanity, a beast-like voice spreading through spread, to a point where the term anguish was insufficient in describing it, and Riddhe sensed that his fingers on the trigger was starting to tremble. The light from the explosion started to expand, engulfing the white machine that was wailing to high above. In the midst of this light that covered his sights, something else gave off a sharp light different from the explosion, and a rain of light scattered everywhere like numerous eedles.

"Wha...what is this light…?"

The rain of light passed through the armor and entered the cockpit, permeating through Riddhe's body, causing his body on the linear seat to quiver. It could not be called an explosion light, as this light expanded, erasing his sights and thoughts, engulfing the "Banshee" that stood there blankly. The light spread throughout the entire space, shining brighter than all the stars between the Moon and the Earth.

Part 15

The lights left in vacuum continued to spread, the "Kshatriya" vanished just like that, like the dozens of mobile suits that were shot down in this battlefield, on this day. One had to think of what those pilots were thinking, and whether any of them had similar lives.

He seemed to be screaming; this fuzzy impression was the only memory left within his mind. There was no voice, no thought as Banagher watched the light engulf Marida. *She's dead--impossible. There's no reason for her to be dead. I still haven't brought her to the ice cream shop. She still hasn't treated her thoroughly battered body. She never had time to talk with Zinnerman.*

Everything was just about to begin. She had undone the curse bound to her, and she was about to live on; how could someone die without having lived a life? Why did she disappear without leaving even a bone behind? She's not died. Miss Marida, impossible…

Banagher was crying; his body had accepted reality faster than his soul, shedding tears unconditionally. The light of the psycoframe changed amidst his hazy vision, and the cockpit showed a red attack color. Banagher narrowed his soaked eyes, and whilst driven by the light reflecting his heart, he aimed the beam rifle at the shining, still "Banshee".

He gritted his teeth, and held the trigger with the finger of the manipulator. He would not be able to breathe if he did not do so, and the heat in his heart was filling his body, about to break through it. *I won't forgive you. Disappear.* He muttered in his heart, now a core reactor, and just when his finger was about to exert strength, he saw a light descend gently, taking the form of a hand, grabbing the muzzle of the rifle.

--That's not it, Banagher.

The hand of light gently lowered the beam rifle, and permeated into the cockpit through the armor. Bangher could ostensibly smell the sweet fragrance Marida had as he hurriedly reached his hand for the light.

--He's in pain too. You should understand.

His fingertips tried to grab onto it, only to miss and hit the display board, letting out a blunt sound. He could not touch it; it was so warm, yet he could not grab it. He looked up at the translucent light that floated there, looking down upon him, " Bu-But…!" Banagher yelled,

"But that's too much! Nothing good ever happened to you! Just war, injuries, chaos…! Maybe...you could have lived your own life in the future…!"

The voice he eked out was drowned by his sobbing, and he, unable to vent his emotions completely, let out tears from his eyes. Marida touched his trembling shoulders, bent down, and gently embraced Banagher. The light embracing the latter was filled with her weight and warmth, dripping into his heart little by little.

--That's not it. You're crying for me, and I know many are mourning over my demise. That's good enough for me.

"What about the Captain? If you're not around too, what's going to happen to him? You're his 'light'…"

He pulled in the light he could not embrace, his hands pressing onto his chest, unable to touch anything physical. *You're in my heart because you shone the 'light' in me.* She showed a slightly troubled smile as she wiped his tears with her glowing finger, and left the cockpit just as she had entered.

--Banagher, right now, I can see things you all can't.

Marida said as she stood in vacuum through the all-view monitor. On the other side was a sea of psyco field, with rainbow light floating in it. It was a field of light formed by human hearts…

--Every person is standing in front of that door. Maybe one day, the time will come when they step through it physically. I can even see time, filled with light here.

"Time...you can see...time…?"

--There's a path reaching out beyond this rainbow.

Marida muttered as she swayed her long hair and blended with the light. Banagher tried to chase after her subconsciously, and once he realized that he had left his physical body because of this, he felt as if he was floating amidst this psyco field.

An illusion? Perhaps. Even if he was a Newtype, he never thought that the human consciousness and body could be so free. He however was certainly thrown into space, drifting in the sea of the psyco field, resonating with the light Marida gave. At the same time, a clear thought drew a line through space, and in this region not hindered by time and space, their consciousness resonated like they were playing about, touching every single heart in this space.

The "Banshee" looked lost while its horns gave off a golden light , drifting in space. The black pilot suit inside the machine was trembling in the midst of his filled body and mind, probably still unable to understand what he just saw. Riddhe did not know how to haggle, would only face things head on, and did not know how to change. There was no time to re-button as his lonely soul continued to seal himself amidst the light.

--That soul doesn't know how to change, and is destroying others as well as himself.

Marida said to him. "Hii…!" he let out a shriek upon touching the thought, in the form of a light, his body writhing, his eyes widening in fear. Such a reaction was certainly due to him being unable to adapt.

--This world will not be formed if it had not been done. However, if you continues to insist on this, it will keep suffocating you. I hope you will continue to stay by Banagher. The Lion and the Unicorn has to be balanced as equals. If there is only one, he might destroy the world.

"What, is this voice...am-am I crazy…?"

Riddhe's eyes were rolling about, his hands pressing on his helmet, his teeth clattering, unable to grit. However, his eyes did not lose sanity however, for his inner consciousness understood that this was a necessary 'voice'. His outer consciousness too was starting to realize this.

--You can calm down and look at your surroundings. The world is so wide; so many people are resounding with each other.

His trembling eyes blinked several times as he looked around the space around him. The psyco frame reflecting his soul became much gentler, and the lion "Gundam" gradually calmed down.

Once she patted the machine that was her alter ego, Marida left the "Banshee". "Wait…!" With Riddhe lifting his head behind her, her consciousness, drifting in space, went for another source of light.

Alberto was surrounded by the luminous light leaking out from the psyco frames in the containers, his Base Jabber drifting silently in space. Basked in the midst of the light from the "Kshatriya" explosion, he realized that his hopes were dashed, but his feeble soul was unable to accept reality. His empty voice continued to seek the hope that no longer existed, seeping from the cramped control room, yet unable to reach anyone.

"That light...what did you do, Riddhe? Tell me the situation. Your voice...I can't hear anything…"

--The person who tried to love me.

The light shining upon him conveyed Marida's consciousness, and his massive body, squashed into the co-pilot suit, was shuddering, "Marida…" he murmured, and at that instant, he showed a heinous look His anguish was turned into hatred, for while attacking others, he ended up hurting himself in this twisted yet tragic role. Like usual, he tried to convert the grief he could not handle into hatred for others, and dyed his body, already used to despair, into black.

"Who shot you down? Riddhe!? Riddhe!? Did you do it!? Damn it, Riddhe!? Why did you let Marida appear on the battlefield! You're always trampling those important to--"

--Nobody is at fault here. What happened to that person can only happen to him. What happened to yourself is the same.

He was betrayed by his father, and was egged by his aunt into taking him down. To make up for the darkness that was born, he hated his half-brother, gave Riddhe the "Banshee", and then--this hatred vanished from Alberto's eyes once he understood everything, and he let out tears of remorse. "Bu-but…!" he let out a toddler's whimper, and wanted to embrace the light. His body however fell onto the console, and this anguish he felt head on for the first time caused his profile to shudder.

"It's alright if you don't love me. I just want you to be with me. I feel that I can definitely start anew if I'm with you...I can't do it alone. There's no way I can do it alone…!"

--Don't be afraid. You've already started anew. I hope you can tell everyone what you wanted to tell me.

"No! Are you dead!? Are you going to leave me alone just like mom!? I don't want to hear what someone says before dying and leaving me alone!"

--Alberto...you'll die as well if this keeps up. Think of how to live along with everyone. You know you can't do it alone.

"Wait! Don't get, Marida! My…!"

Marida grasped that outstretched hand, and after conveying the final bit of warmth, her light faded. Alberto embraced that gradually fading warmth as he bent down, trying his best to keep

it. He was curled in a ball, sobbing away; however, that was not a vengeful call nobody could hear, but a cry from his heart, one that could touch the souls of others…

"Is the "Nahel Argama" alright? Did something become a shield!"

(It's not the "Gundam", but the light's too strong. I can't tell. What is that light down there…?)

The pilot in the "Loto" answered Conroy's bellow with a stunned tone. Mineva however had already understood what had happened. In the control room of this Type-94 Base Jabber, she alone bore the gravity of something lost as she silently watched the light shining in from outside the room. The poignant, towering light of consciousness was filled with warmth and gentleness within.

--I'm sorry, Princess. This is the end for Marida Cruz.

Thus, she was not surprised in the least to hear this 'voice', this thought passing through her body. Mineva lowered her emerald eyes, "Seriously, you…" she eked out a trembling voice, her tears flowing till her long eyelashes as she basked in the light filled with Marida's consciousness, it flickering like morning dew.

"i...I don't know how to apologize to you for all these. Zeon only caused you all this pain...never giving you any reward…"

--If your heart is always that tightened, it will snap. Please open up your heart, Princess. You still have something else to do.

Mineva's shoulders quivered slightly as she lifted her moist face . Her eyes, reflecting the flickering of the light, started to focus, as if Marida was really there.

--I'll leave Banagher to you. He still has yet to control his power completely. He needs your help, Princess.

"Bu-but, Marida...you may be what the Unicorn needs…"

The thing that continues to exist in the silver mirror, and the beast of possibilities in her heart. Mineva reflected upon how she was unable to do anything, and was the cause of Riddhe's rampage, and clenched her fists. Marida left behind a lonely smile as her transparent body departed from Mineva.

--Bodies with blood flowing through them need human bodies that can also bring warmth. Please go on, Banagher is still calling for you.

"Banagher…?"

Marida nodded at Mineva as the latter murmured, and she again dissolved into the light. She continued to race through this time and space that had yet to cease, but was not flowing smoothly , her consciousness arriving at the last place she had to visit.

The damaged ship was basked in the light, and to the "Nahel Argama" that was sailing through the debris, this strange light was simply one of the continuous phenomena. Having become a shield for this ship, the light spread about, and everyone in the bridge

was stunned, but they did not lose their sanities of having to deal with reality.

"It's the "Kshatriya! Lieutenant Marida sacrificed herself as a shield…!"

"Was she shot down!?"

"Hurry up and check on it!! This is different from an explosion!! "

Mihiro's shriek, Liam's shout and Otto's holler could be heard in order, yet Zinnerman was the only one not to be stunned as he looked at the light with a face exceptionally calm to a bystander. It was not because he was unsure of the situation, but that one could even say he knew before anyone else, and had accepted it. The consciousness that was mixed amidst the light reached the bridge before the observation report came in, standing in front of him.

--Captain, the Federation and the Vist Foundation have locked down this space region. They won't attack immediately, but please be careful. I sense a powerful energy swirling.

"Marida...y-you idiot. You came here right at the end to say such a thing…"

Zinnerman understood very well that he was the one she trusted most, and that was why she conveyed such an important information. Even so, he was unable to contain the unspeakable anguish and fury that was seeping out of his entire body, and he stared at the light of consciousness gathered above the console.

Marida watched the tears rain from his eyes, her consciousness seemingly looking down as the light flickered.

"Don't worry about us. Talk about yourself. You're going now, right? Are you going to where Fee and Marie are now? Complain about something! Don't give that acceptance look! Scold me…! I...I never did anything for you…"

--I just wanted to see you again. I'm worried...if it had hit me, would it be enough to negate the power of the beam. It's great that you're alright, Captain.

"Marida…!"

--I finally can't say it fully. What you did for me, you saved me...you're my 'light', the 'light' of this human called Marida Cruz.

The light flashing outside the window gradually faded away, and Marida's consciousness started to dim. Zinnerman suddenly got up from his seat, wanting to grab the disappearing consciousness, only to miss and fall upon the console.

"Don't joke with me now! Come back! Revive from the dead and return to me! If you can't do that, I'll go over! Don't go anywhere now, Marida! I take back that order just now! Stay by me! Don't leave me alone…!"

--Papa, don't put me on the spot.

Marida's consciousness swayed as it covered the hands grabbing onto the console, her last remaining weight and warmth synchronizing with ZInnerman's.

Zinnerman wanted to embrace her tightly, but was unable to do so as he hugged his own shoulder. His shoulders were writhing like a paralytic, and his sobbing echoed through the bridge, not caring about his own image at all.

--There are also many other 'lights' gathered here. Many 'lights' have yet to notice each other's 'light', waiting silently in the darkness...please look for them, like the time when I was reborn.

The light vanished, and Marida's consciousness lost tangibility as it melted away from Zinnerman's body. He continued to embrace his writhing body as he pressed his helmet on the console , not moving afterwards. As Otto and the rest watched on wordlessly, the suppressed sobbing could be heard from the back of the normal suit as it continued to tremble silently, blending into the body of 'light' that would never disappear.

The light finally vanished without a trace, and the vacuum was reverted back to its original darkness. Having forgotten about his physical body, Banagher left Marida's consciousness as the latter gradually lost her form as a human, and he returned to his physical body that was left inside the "Unicorn Gundam".

Marida's consciousness disappeared into the horizon along with the light from the psyco field, to a place the human consciousness

could not reach. Out of the Solar System, on the other end of the Milky Way, to another universe...linking to the other end of the rainbow, the horizon called possibilities. Either way, the place there would be filled with light, even the concept of time itself. There would definitely be no wars, an infinite horizon--the residence of the God called possibilities certainly existed on the other end of this rainbow.

But to the bodies of flesh, that place was too far away. They had to fight all irrationality, understand each other using the power they had, and pass on the warmth of this body. Banagher lifted his head, his dried teary stared at the space shown in the actual footage.

He could no longer hear Marida's voice. What surrounded him was only the world he could sense, and the billions of stars surrounding the "Unicorn Gundam" seemed to be telling him that this was enough; they shone hard lights upon him, lighting the space that was not fully utilized.

Part 16

Once the light had fully dissipated, a blueish-white gas was left behind, showing an icy color. None of the machine's debris could be seen, for it was practically vaporized, and only the space debris, floating around for countless years, was slowly drifting away, slowly twirling the thinning gaseous clouds.

It was a typical scene of a downed site...but there was something different. Riddhe had a feeling of the world changed once the explosion occurred, that something was reversed. The

beams had ceased, and after he looked around as the silent shoal space region, he opened the visor to wipe the sweat off his face.

The trembling of his hand could not stop. He felt the agony in his heart become a lead block, his gut weighed down. The thoughts released by another person in that instant formed a weight deep within his heart. His maddening senses filled his body, yet the owner of that vanished 'voice' lingered somewhere deep within his heart.

"Is this, a Newtype's senses...?"

He originally intended to cry out and deny the voice, but another wave of trembling reached his fingertips. It was not the noise from the psycoframe, so who is it? The "Banshee" lost the glow of its psycoframe, and as Riddhe let it face the gas silently, (That's not it) he heard a strong voice, was taken aback by it, and turned to look behind.

(Miss Marida, she has always been doing her best...she has always tried her best to live on, that's why she's able to pass on her voice.)

The hushed voice was trembling, and the “Unicorn Gundam”, standing less than a kilometer away, was giving off a gentle light. They had been fighting each other just an instant ago, but he could not sense any hostility or fear. Their attempts to kill each other just before this was simply a surreal, distant memory. Riddhe did not feel mystified by it as he simply stared at the machine that had lost

its luster, “Banagher...” he called out skeptically, but the “Unicorn Gundam” never responded as it lit its vernier thrusters, turned away, and went off, exposing its undefended back.

The “Nahel Argama” was not there. He knew that Banagher was headed to “Industrial 7”, but he could not understand where he was supposed to go. *she has always tried her best to live on, that's why she's able to pass on her voice.*. Riddhe repeated these words in his heart, and turned his sights to the black gloved hand.

It doesn't matter if I'm a Newtype or not. What matters is whether my heart can reach out to others, and whether I can accept others. It's useless segregating them right from the beginning; nobody's voice would reach me. I mixed up my family issues with my personal grudges, and I killed someone through my lapse of judgment and hatred, and I have nobody to convey my thoughts to. That 'voice' told me there's someone important on board, that woman Alberto likes, she told me this world's too big, that there's no need to despair, that I should find someone who can relieve this hatred from me, and yet, with these hands of mine, I--

He could not locate the Type-94 Base Jabber within the sensors, he could not hear Alberto's voice, and the “Nahel Argama” remained silent, not letting out a single voice. *I'm alone.* He truly felt this, the lead of anguish melting in his heart, gushing out from his eyes in the form of tears. *Nobody's willing to talk to me. I let down Mineva, Banagher, Alberto, father, everyone. I really want to start again, turn back time, meet with everyone again. I won't take the wrong path this time. I won't be alone again, and I'll live on to be the me everyone knows of, the one that will live with everyone,*

“But, none of this...can be taken back...again...”

The endless stream of tears floated the moment they flowed out, drifting in front of his eyes in the form of round goblets. Riddhe was surrounded by the water droplets that washed his ignorance away, whimpering in the cockpit of the “Banshee”.

Part 17

Having felt a sudden headache, Ronan reached his hand for his head.

He felt an inexplicable sense of pressure, and what swarmed after that was a tremendous sharp migraine that reached his chest. He felt as if the little Riddhe back then was crying, *is it just my imagination?* He recalled the pressure that brought about gloom in his chest, and rubbed his eyes, took a deep breath, and stared at the 6 large panel monitors. Martha, standing beside him, glanced over, “It's been tough on you.” and muttered,

“Do you need a smoke in the restroom, or at least a seat?”

“No need for that. If the colony laser's fired without me witnessing it, I won't be able to bear it.”

Martha merely laughed it off, and never talked about it again. Ronan noticed sweat falling from her forehead, and was sure that the woman had sensed it. He again stared at the telescopic footage captured from the moon.

The situation in the 'Caucacus Forest'--the control room for the colony laser 'Gryphios 2' had yet to change. The incoming reports

were all militaristic, and the battlefield shown on the telescopic visual merely showed light spots that could not be identified. However, something heavy did blow through this control room. It seemed to be an outcry, or a gust, quaking the minds of everyone present in the room. Ronan even had a vision of something occurring on the other side of the screen.

His temples pulsating along with the migraine, he saw a vision of an explosion expanding, giving off a rain of light. Of course, that was not reality; even if he wanted to joke, he would not say that he managed to hear a cry from a battlefield more than 300,000km away, and he did not feel that he could sense that. That was simply a collective hypnosis from the flickering light far away..Ronan barely managed to conclude this as he stared at the flashing beacon that was still wavering. “It has been 3 minutes since we observed the last light from the battle.” Commander Ables approached to Ronan's side and spoke stiffly,

“It seems the battle has ended, and the “Nahel Argama” is still around. Looking at the current speed, it will take them another 30 minutes to reach “Industrial 7”.”

His face was slightly paled, for the entire Neo Zeon fleet that had gathered was shot down by a mere ship, and this rebel ship was approaching its objective, clearly a show of the threat level they presented. Ronan calmly accepted the developments that had occurred, but was skeptical as to how he had predicted the battle would end. He did not look at anyone as his stare returned to the monitors. Ables then turned his sights to Martha,

"The remaining Neo Zeon fleet, with the "Rewloola" as the center, will reach the target an hour and a half later than the " Nahel Argama". The firing safety has been confirmed. You may give your instructions."

"It means the time has arrived."

Martha folded her arms on her chest, her eyes holding a sharp glint. "Not yet." Ronan felt himself taking a step closer to the cliff as he denied her.

"It might not be too late even if they do make contact with the " Box"."

"How relaxed you are...it will be too late once they open the " Box"!"

"The opening of the "Box" refers to the revelations of the secrets inside. There is a need to recognize what they will really do."

Mineva Zabi is a wise girl, and if she knows of the truth, there is a possibility that she will keep the secret of the "Box". Ronan felt that if it was her, he would be able to carry out political talks with her, but at the same time, he recalled the unfettered emerald eyes, and could only stare at the footage of "Industrial 7" with a heavy heart. "Only those who know what's inside the "Box" can make such a decision." Martha narrowed her eyes at him,

“At this juncture, you can at least tell me what the “Laplace Box ” contained, what that thing that was supposed to be destroyed with the Prime Minister's residence contained.”

The expected question came at him, and he sighed slightly. To Martha, this was simply the perfect opportunity. No matter what kind of outcome was to happen, the Federation and the Vist Foundation's coexistence would head for a new phase. He felt it was meaningless to remain silent, and just when he was about to face a somewhat nervous looking Martha, “Commander Ables!” the metal doors behind opened, and a bellow echoed through the control room.

“There is an emergency. Please allow me to ent--”

A man pushed aside the guard at the door and stormed in, his face frozen once he spotted Ronan. Ronan and Martha too gasped, “Senator Ronan...Lady Martha...” Bright Noa muttered as he stared at their faces. “Captain Bright, I don't suppose I gave you the permit to enter.” Ables glared as he took a step forward; Ronan however already knew from their meeting at his own residence that he was not a man who particularly paid heed to rank or authority. As he had expected, Bright ignored Ables and looked around; once he spotted the anomaly 'Gryphios 2', he glared at Ronan and the rest with some stunned furty.

“What are you doing here!?”

The sharp roar caused all the personnel at their terminals to turn back. Ables seemed to be overwhelmed by his authority as he

gasped, his face flushed, but Ronan glanced at Ables, raised a hand to stop him, and turned back at Bright. At the same time, he glanced at Martha's lowered look, *seriously* the latter seemingly saying this. He then gave an expression to Ables, indicating for the guards at the door to back off. “It's none of your business” The commander showed anger due to his lost pride, but Bright did not mind as he looked back at Ronan.

Where did he get this information from--it was useless to think about it. Bright was the one who planned for the “Nahel Argama” to meet with Mineva's group and head for the “Box”, and Ronan, not anyone else, was the one who implicated Bright in this. Even if he was to be redeployed, with his connections and foresight, it was not a strange thing to be found. Ronan did not feel too skeptical about it, just amazed that all the actors had arrived, and turned to look at the screen again. He caught sight of the telescopic visual showing the colony laser, “Industrial 7”, the shoal space battlefield , and other places. “We don't have an option.” he looked around at what may be a depiction of a conspiracy, and muttered.

"They're the ones making the decisions. Everything will soon end."

He lowered his chin, and spotted anxiety on the sidelong face of Bright as the latter looked up at the screen. The light beacon of the "Nahel Argama" moved slowly, closing in on "Industrial 7".

Part 18

She passed through the cabin at the back, through the air lock, and arrived at the platform of the Type-94 base Jabber exposed to vacuum. A tank-mode "Loto" was moving around on this space large enough for a mobile suit to lie on, a rectangular space large enough for a bed to be filled. Mineva grabbed onto a safety hook at the side of the airlock, tightened it, stepped off the platform and flew to the "Loto". Her vision, unhindered by anything, showed the silent shoal space region, and she could see numerous space debris floating around at relative velocity.

The newly formed debris were on the same path as the Base Jabber, surrounding it. They were shone upon by the moon that seemed large enough to be embraced, flickering time from time to time like a group of fireflies dancing in vacuum. The debris field was moving faster than the Base Jabber, slowly floating beside Mineva. Countless fragments of light flickered and frolicked, lighting the path to Industrial 7.

Marida's fragments. Mineva was affected by these words that suddenly appeared in her heart, and she bit her lips. She took a deep sigh, and turned her body to the back of the machine. The

thruster flare could be seen flickering far away, and the white humanoid machine appearing in the darkness was gradually approaching. Soon after, she could identify it as the “Unicorn”, its thruster flares slowing down, positioning itself above the Base Jabber.

The lone horned giant had removed itself from its destroy mode as it slowly descended. The pure white armor showed the numerous wounds and burns that stained it, and Mineva was left speechless at the unexpected damage incurred. Its cockpit suddenly opened, and a hole appeared at the abdomen as the machine looked down at Mineva. *Banagher’s calling for you*--she did not reflect too much upon the 'voice' she just heard as she stepped off the “Loto” and leapt up, reaching the opened quadrilateral cockpit before the “Unicorn” manipulator could grab the platform guide and attain relative speed with the Base Jabber.

The inside of the cockpit was exceptionally dark, probably because the all-view monitor was showing the footage of space. Mineva's upper body entered the darkness that was no different from the outside, and stared at the white pilot suit appearing in the darkness. “Banagher...” she inadvertently called out, and the helmet tilted slightly, seemingly realizing the voice as his eyes blinked, (Audrey...why're you here?) his lethargic stare could be seen through the visor, and he looked ready to let go in front of her eyes, not having realized that the cockpit hatch was opened. Mineva instantly embraced Banagher.

She held his helmet with both hands, and their bodies were clinging to each other on the linear seat. Banagher's mental state was different from hers, trying his best to suppress his emotions--

and if this kept up, he would have been destroyed. As she embraced his cold body, wanting to at least pass on some warmth to him, “Audrey...?” there seemed to be direct communication between them, for their helmets were connected. Banagher sounded skeptical at this sudden action, but his arms too were embracing her, not letting go. The familiar hands were were holding onto her, seemingly latching onto the body that was about to fall off, giving her some warmth through the normal suit.

“...Miss Marida, she said everything to me.”

After some time, Banagher murmured. Mineva backed away a little and peered at the face hidden beneath the visor.

“She told me not to be angry, to forgive Ensign Riddhe. I did it...”

His eyes showed trails of tears, the trembling in his body having reached Mineva. The latter embraced his helmet, sticking onto his body as she ostensibly absorbed that trembling. “You managed to do it.” She eked out a sobbing voice.

“It's amazing, Banagher. Marida's definitely proud of you...”

“Of course. She requested this of me for the first time...bu-but...”

The arms stretching from the waist to the back exerted strength, and the sobbing breath quivered the helmet. Mineva too closed her crying eyes.

“Can you let me remain like this...?”

His voice was cracking, seemingly having found a way to vent his frustrations, and Mineva, as a response, embraced him with enough strength not to lose to him. The trembling got strong, and the sobbing caused the shoulders to vacillate. Banagher let out a cry as he entrusted his body to Mineva, who was embracing him tightly.

He had a childish lack of restraint, crying wholeheartedly even after venting all his emotions. his undulated quivering shook the floating tears. Mineva looked back, and at the cockpit hatch in front of her, she could see a trail of stars in the galaxy. As the galaxy laid in the background, there was an object, the size of a thumb, floating there; it was where everything began, where she met and entered the life of this person trembling in her arms. “ Industrial 7” was floating along with the colony builder “ Magallanica”, drifting in the shoal space region.

Marida had showed them the horizon where the god of possibilities lived was so distant, but no matter what sort of truth awaited them, they could only move forward. As they entrusted their movements to the Base Jabber, Mineva stared at the “ Industrial 7” that got bigger. The space had lost all hostility, still remaining dark as ever, yet Marida's fragments surrounded them, continuing shining a dim light.

Part 19

The small thruster lights passed through the other end of the countless debris. The Base Jabber made contact with the “Unicorn”

, and that light was veiled amidst the sea of space debris in their eyes, vanishing from their binoculars sights.

Nigel sighed as he removed the binoculars strapped upon his helmet. The “Jesta” surveillance cameras had better analytical abilities than the binoculars on the normal suit, but the condition was that the machine had to be in working condition. He closed the access hatch at his feet, and started checking on his unit's condition from the torso armor, looking gloomy at the damage incurred as even the main camera was sliced apart. Though they had made some emergency repairs, he wondered if they could return to the “General Revil” in this situation. Perhaps he should be relieved that the limbs were still intact.

Daryl's “Jesta” too floated by the side, looking to be in similar shape besides the still-functioning main camera. Nigel spotted the goggles watching the thruster flare. “You know where they're going?” and asked. (Got to be “Industrial 7”. There's no other place to go.) Daryl had already finished his emergency repairs and returned to the cockpit, his voice ringing through the wireless communicator.

(The “Nahel Argama” is also taking the same path. They're aiming for that place...)

“I guessed so. I get the feeling that we'll know more after getting there. Maybe that “Laplace Box” is still there.”

Nigel suddenly recalled Mineva Zabi's voice, and then he recalled the voice of Watts saying that there was one thing they had to do. (Are we going to meet up with the “Nahel Argama”?)

He heard Daryl ask this amidst his bitterness, and murmured in his heart, *That impatient guy left without getting a girl who'll cry for him.* He looked up at the space that had devoured Watts' life, " Better not for now." and answered with a sigh.

"Some things are to be watched and understood from afar. The "General Revil" should be arriving soon. Maintain our distance. We're approaching "Industrial 7"."

(Understood. Can you move?)

"It can still move somehow, but this "Jesta" isn't going to last a beating from a psyco machine."

It was embarrassing, but this was the lasting impression made during the battles over the past 2 hours. *We couldn't intervene in the battle between the "Unicorn" and the purple mobile suit, and we're chased out when the "Sinanju" just now. We got involved in that unknown light the "Unicorn" and the "Sinanju" gave off, and then we got bounced out of the battlefield.'*

He eavesdropped upon the wireless communicator, and it seemed to be called a psyco field. He did not know the result of the battle, and he was unsure of Full Frontal's fate, but he could not feel that immense killing intent. The difference in ability was so big he could not regret upon it, and his mind started to think about philosophical matters what is a spirit to sense each other, what those who have adapted themselves to space should do. *What will Watts think?* Nigel carelessly thought, his face contorted as he was unable to give a wry look at this. (There shouldn't be a problem here!) Daryl answered.

(The battle seemed to have ended. There's no Newtype that can fight the “Unicorn” in this space.)

The definite tone caused his tense face to relax somewhat. *Looks like I’m not the only one transformed..* Nigel turned towards Daryl's unit and asked, “Did you find the “Banshee”?” He was hoping that maybe he could sense Riddhe's presence, since he did sense the latter fighting the “Unicorn”. (There's too much debris...) Daryl however answered vaguely.

(The light from the psyco field vanished after that mysterious explosion. Is that...)

“Probably not. That...I'm not so sure what it is, but I'm guessing it's not Riddhe.”

The pressure he felt back then still lingered in his heart as a distant echo. It was the 'voice' of a woman, a 'voice' that was spread out along with a certain explosion soon after he had detected a battle between the “Banshee” and the “Unicorn”. *I’m able to access the situation coolly in my heart; maybe that’s thanks to the ’voice’ comforting my battered body and mind. We probably would have returned to the battlefield with revenge on our minds and ended up like Watts if that didn’t happen.*

“Psyco field. Spirit...is it a field created by sous?”

He subconsciously muttered, and just when he was grimacing that it was unlike him, and noticed something flash by in the corner of his eye.

While the debris drifted in inertia, one lingering color was etched in his eyes as it flowed towards “Industrial 7”. It was merely the size of a pebble, and though the debris was too small to be clearly identified, that was--

“The Red Comet...?”

A red color appeared for an instant, basked under the moonlight, the remnant of what seemed to be a mobile suit gliding through the shoal space region. It quickly merged into the other debris, unable to be identified, into the darkness even the binoculars could not detect.